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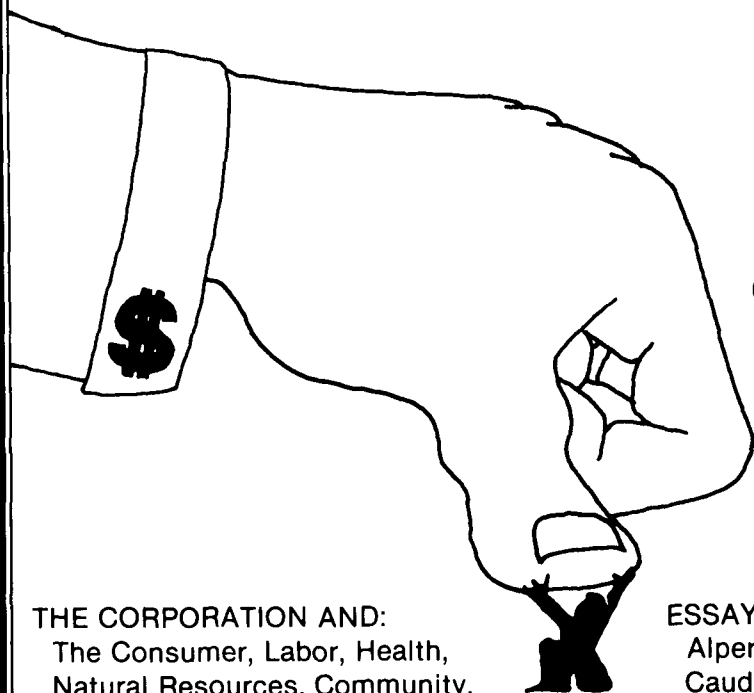
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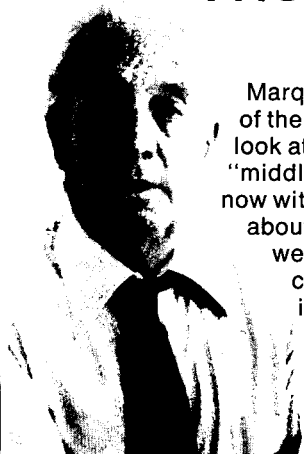
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After Afghanistan

We asked several of our editors to comment on the changed international situation after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. There will be a second round in the next issue.—EDS.

Dennis H. Wrong

The Soviet Union has acted before with brutal decisiveness along its own borders when the Western powers were preoccupied elsewhere. Hungary was invaded in 1956 at the time of the Suez war, Czechoslovakia in 1968 when the United States was involved in a war in Southeast Asia that was the major issue in a bitter presidential campaign. For that matter, one can go all the way back to the Nazi-Soviet pact with its secret clause partitioning Poland and the invasion of Finland later that year when Stalin's German ally was at war with Britain and France.

Afghanistan, unlike Hungary and Czechoslovakia, had not previously been under Soviet domination, so its occupation is a more blatant act of aggression in defiance of the international status quo. As in the case of the Czech invasion, the sending of troops into Afghanistan may have been the outcome of a power struggle in the Politbureau—set off probably by Brezhnev's impending death or retirement—but I doubt that it represents the first step of a grand design to dismember Iran, set up a puppet state in Baluchistan or seize the Arabian oilfields, although it clearly puts the Soviet Union in a better position to capitalize on unrest throughout the region.

The so-called Carter doctrine pledging defense of the Middle East and Persian Gulf is important only as a symbolic gesture of American firmness. The United States had, as a matter of fact, given the same pledge back in 1957. The real problem is not a direct Soviet military threat but the endlessly recurring one of the consequences of giving political and military support to authoritarian governments in the area (including China), most of

which are of doubtful stability and therefore vulnerable to internal subversion aided by the Soviet Union. The Russians have the same trouble with their client states—that is, after all, why they invaded Afghanistan—but they are the challenging power, operate nearer their own borders, and do not have to submit their actions to public debate at home.

American power in the world has clearly declined as measured by reduced ability to influence events far from our own borders, but this was largely an inevitable development. The United States was the only true world power immediately after the Second World War, a situation that could not last. Even then we were unable to prevent Soviet control of Eastern Europe. We held the Soviet Union to the postwar military lines of demarcation, but our success in Western Europe is not a proper standard by which to judge our more recent failures in other regions, because the nations of Western Europe, though weakened by the war with Germany, were mostly democracies sharing with us a common culture and the determination to resist submission to Soviet totalitarianism. If American prospects now look grimmer in the more unstable area from the Levant to India (not to speak of the other side of India), at least the fear of nuclear war has been considerably dispelled since the 1950s with the acceptance by both great powers of the "balance of terror" or "mutual assured destruction." In contrast to Vietnam, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf are vital to the interests of the West and Japan, primarily but by no means solely because of oil. Yes, there are conceivable situations in which an American military response

might be necessary—I hope the United States would undertake it as reluctantly as “we” would endorse it.

The apparent renewal of the Cold War should put an end to querulous talk about the “failure of nerve” of American leadership and its “guilt complex” toward poor, non-Western societies allegedly fostered by leftist ideologues. There *was* a post-Vietnam mood of tentative withdrawal from international commitments, but this was an understandable and even healthy response to the wounds inflicted by the debacle in Southeast Asia as well as by the Watergate scandal in which Nixon so readily invoked the shibboleth of “national security” to justify his most questionable actions. I regret that the United States did not respond more forcefully to the Soviet use of Cuban janissaries in Africa, which undoubtedly contributed to the decision to invade Afghanistan. But the passive interlude of a few years was needed to come to terms with the defeat in Vietnam and to get rid of such relics of earlier Cold War ventures and postures as the overextended CIA and J. Edgar Hoover’s archaic, superpatriotic FBI.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL SITUATION is no more likely to produce a domestic shift to the right than to the left. It will rather strengthen the present centrist leadership, in part because a centrist president happens to be in office. More important, when danger looms abroad, the American electorate usually favors leaders perceived as moderate over either belligerent hawks or moralizing doves. This was true in the ‘50s when opposition to the Truman administration and the Eastern Republicans behind Eisenhower came from a Republican right animated by a “politics of revenge” against the New Deal and the ideological aura under which we fought the Second World War.

No comparable faction eager to exploit anti-Communism for domestic political ends exists in American politics today. Republican presidential candidates seemed more upset by how Carter’s grain embargo of the Soviet Union would affect Iowa farmers than by the Soviet action that provoked it. Senators Jackson and Moynihan, the AFL-CIO leadership, and *Commentary* cannot, whatever their errors of judgment and rhetorical excesses, be equated with the likes of Senator McCarthy, General MacArthur, and the columnists of the Hearst and McCormick press back in 1950, or even with Goldwater in 1964. If they persist in their “hawkishness”—and there are signs

that some of them, e.g., Senator Moynihan, are counseling caution now that they think Carter has seen the light—they will end up as isolated as the “radical right” of the ‘50s. True, thunder on the right after the Chinese Communist victory rigidified our Cold War positions, contributed to the sickening simplifications and pieties of “Cold War propaganda,” and helped bring about the disaster in Vietnam when three presidents kept imagining they still heard it rumbling in the distance. But those volcanoes—to mix my metaphors—are extinct. There is no longer any domestic constituency for the anti-Communist war cries of the past.

On the left, one observes some utterly predictable hand-wringing about Carter’s “overreaction” and even hears plaintive cries that this sort of thing was supposed to have been ended forever by the Vietnam disaster. If the hawks of the Committee on the Present Danger have often seemed fixated on the Soviet threat to Europe in the ‘50s as the eternal norm for American foreign policy, the protesters on the left take their norm from Vietnam. Often too young to recall what was at stake in Europe in 1946-55 (or even in the Second World War), they refuse to acknowledge the reality of a world power struggle with the Soviet Union that cannot be dismissed as a cloak for “American imperialism” or “capitalist” expansionism. Yet, even before Afghanistan, unpleasant realities were beginning to break through to the radicals weaned in the late ‘60s: most of all, the horrors of Cambodian genocide and Vietnamese mass expulsion of their Chinese minority, the only actions since 1945 comparable to Hitler’s. But there has also been de-Maoization in China and the revelation of how little Maoism had overcome Chinese backwardness; Chinese and Vietnamese military aggressions in Southeast Asia; the willingness of Cuba to serve as an instrument of Soviet ambitions; and the atavistic turn of the Iranian Revolution.

These events have had an impact on the remnants of the New Left comparable to that of Stalinism on an earlier generation. (See, for example, the forthright and sensible statement by David Horowitz, a former editor of *Ramparts* and “revisionist” historian of the Cold War, in the *Nation*, December 8, 1979.) The vogue of scholastic Marxism in the universities also seems to have peaked, and one runs into more and more young academics who are actually thinking their way out of it. For almost the first time since 1917 there is not a single nation anywhere in the world that can plausibly be presented as a model by those

leftists who labor under a compulsion to see their ideals embodied in a real, if very faraway, place. Many of those who have recently abandoned chiliastic or doctrinaire radicalism will, one hopes, become recruits of the “democratic left.”

THERE IS, of course, a sense in which crises abroad can always be seen as favoring the right, since they downgrade the importance of the domestic reforms that are virtually the *raison d'être* of the left. Isolationism tends to be the left's most “natural” posture, as has again become apparent after the period of nearly 40 years during which the left embraced the Popular Front and the war against Hitler and acquiesced in the Cold War out of disillusionment with Stalinist Communism. American politics, however, were hardly moving to the left before Afghanistan, unless one makes the dubious assumption that Senator Kennedy could have rallied the country behind his bid for the presidency. The new international crisis is as likely to scuttle such new right-wing proposals as the Kemp-Roth bill or imitations of Proposition 13 as to forestall extensions of the welfare state that had not really been in the cards anyway. We ought to give up the bad habit of thinking of foreign policy in left/right terms that are really a projection of the politics of the “democratic class struggle” in advanced Western societies.

Coming after total failure in Vietnam, where the lessons of previous successes in Western Europe were misapplied, perhaps this time the United States will proceed with caution and avoid the excesses of our earlier ideological mobilization. Yet one cannot help but be depressed by the general readiness to dwell on the possibility of nuclear war on the part both of those who are prepared grimly to accept it as a “thinkable” response and of those too fearful to consider seriously any resistance to Soviet power falling short of it yet ending the illusions of detente. Nor can one be confident that American political leaders and public opinion are more realistic than in the past in facing up to the necessity of dealing with unsavory allies without forgetting their unsavoriness. The record from Stalin in the Second World War to the Shah just the other day is a long and discouraging one. At least the seizure of the American embassy and the anti-American mob scenes in Teheran make it unlikely that anyone will be tempted to paraphrase Lyndon Johnson on Diem and describe our possible future ally, the Ayatollah Khomeini, as “the Churchill of the Persian Gulf.” □

Michael Harrington

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a blatant and imperialist violation of the right of national self-determination—it was not a radical new departure in Russian policy. However, even if it were—even if Jimmy Carter's worst fears are confirmed—Washington's response is erratic and counterproductive.

Before trying to outline that first proposition about the nature of the Soviet threat, let me emphasize the qualification in my second point. I am obviously influenced in my thinking by the conclusion that the Soviets are acting as usual, that there is not a new and sweeping offensive, as Carter, Kissinger, and others think. But my policy proposals do not rest upon that thesis, which is, of necessity, somewhat speculative. They are developed, rather, as a “worst-case” response even though I do not think we are confronted by a “worst case.”

By an accident, I happened to be reviewing the history and literature on Cold War I when the possibility of Cold War II arrived with the Soviet troops in Kabul. Looking back, I was struck by the degree to which almost everyone had become a revisionist of sorts. This is not to say that the defenders of America's role in the original Cold War had adopted the extreme versions of the revisionist thesis—that a conspiratorial, capitalist America with a nuclear monopoly had pounced on a peace-loving Russia out of pathological anti-Communism. It is to argue that practically all accounts of that conflict now recognize a complex and reciprocal causation. And this bears, as we will see in a moment, upon one's estimate of what the Soviets are up to now.

Here, for example, is a striking statement of this new consensus:

... I am inclined to doubt that Stalin originally expected to lock all of Eastern Europe into his satellite orbit; his first postwar steps—such as permitting free elections in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, all of which the Communists lost—suggest that he might have been prepared to settle for their having a status similar to Finland's.

Now I must confess that this comment goes a bit too far in revising anti-revisionism and that I suspect that Stalin always wanted to keep a firmer hand on the East European approaches to the

Soviet Union than on Finland. But I find it fascinating that this assessment was made last year by Henry Kissinger in *White House Years*. For Kissinger—and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and many others—now see Stalin as an essentially defensive totalitarian in the immediate postwar period. The Russian dictator could not believe that the Americans actually took their democratic commitment to a free Poland seriously. The Americans did not understand that it was essential to Stalin's concept of security to control that country. So Stalin concluded that Washington must be engaged in a sweeping anti-Soviet offensive, and he responded in ways that made the American fear of a sweeping Soviet offensive headed toward Western Europe all the more compelling.

The American problem in all this—a point sometimes lost by *Realpolitiker* in these matters—was *not* its commitment to the right to self-determination. That was admirable, and in the case of the Berlin airlift happily triumphant. It was our acting rigidly and legalistically, on the basis of the principle that may well have resulted in our being, as Kissinger suggests, even less able to defend it to the limited extent then possible. Without going any further into this complex history, let me suggest that in part—and only but unmistakably in part—the Soviet Union and the United States may have blundered into the extremes of Cold War I. If Cold War II is infinitely more volatile and explosive than its predecessor, that counsels a careful, sober response to recent events.

BUT THEN, have the Soviets changed, as the same Henry Kissinger now argues? Do Russian (and Cuban proxy) interventions in Angola, Zaire, Ethiopia, Yemen, and now Afghanistan add up to a radical new departure? I agree with Stanley Hoffmann. These “disparate events” are “tied by two threads: low risks, and opportunities provided by previous Western mistakes, defeats or (as in Afghanistan) indifference.”

More broadly, let me state a conclusion for which I do not have the space to argue: that the United States confronts not “Soviet” imperialism but Russian imperialism—i.e., not the expansionism of a nation in the grip of a messianic internationalist ideology for which it is willing to make national sacrifices but the expansionism of an ancient, bureaucratic (whether Stalinist or Czarist) society with almost endless borders as a stimulus to paranoia.

The Russian imperialism of which I speak is hardly benign, as the Hungarians, the Czechs, and

now the Afghans can attest; but neither is it bold and aggressive. It claims the right to destroy the national independence of any neighbor and will fish happily in any troubled American waters. But it *withdrew* from Iran in the '40s, from Austria and China in the '50s, from Egypt and Somalia in the '70s—and it negotiated with Richard Nixon while the latter was trying to bomb North Vietnam back to the stone age. This Russian imperialism is, of course, an antimodel of socialism (or, what is the same thing, the very model of socialism for antisocialists)—but, under certain circumstances, the United States should, can, and must make a deal with the Soviets out of national self-interest as well as in order to avert nuclear holocaust.

But—and I now turn to my second point—even if Carter is right and there is a much more sinister turn of events than I suggest, Carter is wrong in his response. Let me deal with his reactions *ad seriatem*.

- *The Carter Doctrine.* This commits America to police an area 7,000 miles distant from its shores but quite close to the Soviet Union, in which there are only unstable regimes and a probability of indigenous revolutions that could relate to Russian power in ambiguous ways. If we are to act upon this ill-defined pledge on this disadvantageous terrain, we will either have to readopt the failed, but very dangerous, Dulles doctrine of “massive retaliation” or, as Defense Secretary Brown has already intimated, challenge the Russians to a European war if they poach in the Persian Gulf. It was a fear of precisely this last possibility that caused the Socialist International Leaders' Conference in Vienna in early February to condemn the Afghanistan invasion *and* insist that the West continue to seek detente.

- *Registration for the Draft.* In military terms this is a symbol. No one has suggested how a mass draft—with a six-month training period that could only be initiated after still another congressional approval once funds for registration are voted—responds to the Persian Gulf threat. It does, however, have the very real consequence of feeding a Cold War atmosphere in the United States, of sowing illusions about the possibilities of intervention, and so on.

- *The Food Weapon.* As the Saudi Arabia of the Organization of Wheat Exporting Countries, the United States has taken a morally questionable tack of dubious economic and political value. This move could haunt us.

- *Throwing Money at Problems.* The President

and to an even greater extent the Congress are committing the error that Nixon wrongly ascribed to the Great Society: assuming that gross percentage increases in budget outlays are necessarily good and purposive. They can be (a) wasteful and inflationary (the economic impact of Cold War II will be stagflationist and not, as in Cold War I, economically expansionist); (b) destabilizing, as is the case with the extremely expensive and very dangerous MX system; (c) useful for national security. So far, there is no sign that the Administration or the Congress is going to make these distinctions.

IN TWO AREAS, I think the Carter response involves bad versions of good ideas:

- *Technology Limitation.* As part of a firm, rational response to the Soviet invasion—which also includes equally firm offers to begin negotiating once again that Carter neglects—this is a step of limited effectiveness (because of other sources of supply) but worth taking.

- *Olympic Boycott.* In principle, I am in favor of this move. It is a political response; its consequences are limited and controllable; and it apparently communicates to the Soviets a sense of our outrage. But Mr. Carter has approached the issue in the worst way, by means of a take-it-or-leave-it ultimatum. In this, as in all other reactions, the possibility of Russian concessions must be taken into account. They will not be forthcoming if the price is political surrender in the full view of the public.

In one area Mr. Carter did not act, but Senator Kennedy has proposed a most significant step: *coupon rationing for gasoline*. One of the main reasons—the only real reason—why the Persian Gulf is of “vital interest” to the United States is our criminally wasteful energy system. If the President had, in his State of the Union message, taken this real-world step to radically reduce our dependence on the Persian Gulf, if he had focused the patriotic anger and frustration of recent months on this achievable and effective goal, it would not only have improved the American economy. It would have been a devastating response to the Soviets.

I AM FOR a measured reaction, making plain that we still seek detente—not only SALT II but SALT III—because the chain of events since late December has emphasized that the world is even more unstable, more dangerous, than in the days of Cold War I. There is, we said in those days, no alternative to negotiations and disarmament. We were right then, and the frightening possibilities that now emerge confirm it.

The Dutch and Belgian Socialists offer a good model. They neither accepted nor rejected NATO's Euromissiles but called for six months of negotiations with the Soviets over the SS-20 missiles before a decision would be taken. In effect, they offered to give up a bargaining chip before it was built in return for real concessions.

Finally, these events should not allow us to forget the truest cliché of the 20th century: the only alternative to nuclear war in these unstable times is nuclear disarmament and even, one day, peace. □

H. Brand

Afghanistan's strategic significance for Moscow has increased with the change since the mid-'70s in Washington's China policy toward military linkages; Russia's invasion of Afghanistan might be understood in these terms—which will set the framework for the struggle between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. for a long time. Similarly, Arab oil will remain hostage to global instability for years ahead, the more so as vested interests here resist effective conservation measures.

Also, U.S. attempts to recreate a political base, lost with the fall of the Shah, in some other Middle Eastern country are likely to continue to fail. The planned “rapid deployment force,” a device both fatuous and dangerous, is like trying to get fish to swim without water; it cannot be a substitute for such a base. A U.S. presence in the oil fields of Arabia wouldn't be sustainable. Intervention in the Middle East, whether by Russia in Afghanistan or by the U.S. elsewhere, remains anathema to the nations there.

With the loss of political intermediaries, such as the Shah, and tomorrow perhaps the Saudi princes or military dictators like Zia, the U.S. faces the risk of having to confront the Soviet Union directly, in an area where it cannot win militarily. Therefore, a confrontation would spell a war fought wherever either one of the adversaries can maximize its advantage—i.e., a general, a world war.

Such a war may indeed be unthinkable. “I think it's a mistake for anyone to assume that a war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in these days can be won by either side,” said Secretary of

Defense Brown recently (*Wall Street Journal*, February 1, 1980). The idea of the use of tactical nuclear weapons to combat a Russian invasion of Iran, broached in a Pentagon report, represents at best a counsel of despair: warnings that combat-engaging tactical nuclear weapons could easily escalate to strategic nuclear war have run like a red thread through Department of Defense annual reports. So, with all the enormous panoply of military power, its direct use between the two adversaries cannot be countenanced by either. This and the absence of allies, not inadequate preparedness, renders the U.S. impotent in defending "vital interests" 7,000 miles from its shores. The U.S., like Russia, has thus far been successful in circumventing this crisis by means of proxy wars, and occasionally by the show of force. But proxy wars in the Middle East seem no longer possible, while the direct use of military force also appears to be precluded lest general war ensue.

But, as Russia's invasion of Afghanistan demonstrates, the "unthinkability" of a general war doesn't necessarily reduce the *uncontrollability* of events that might end in one. While the "multipolarity" of the '70s and '80s is replacing the "bipolarity" of the '50s and '60s, thus perhaps calling into question the concept of a balance of power, the greatest dangers originate at home. Moscow's brutishness in invading Afghanistan has been widely viewed as if it had no recent history. The internal dissension in that country surely threatened one of the Kremlin's basic ideological tenets, *viz.* that so-called socialist revolutions, least of all those in countries bordering the U.S.S.R., must not be perceived as being reversible. It is this doctrine, enunciated by Brezhnev when he sent Russian tanks into Prague in 1968, that probably united all factions of the Kremlin. That this doctrine must be challenged wherever possible goes without question, although insofar as the challenge is military, it should be posed only by those defending their own independence. But there is also the history of global American actions.

How could these actions have failed to elicit counteractions on Moscow's part; how could the Kremlin have thought them to be less weighty than grain or computer deliveries or the Olympic games? Let us review them briefly.

First, there is the accelerated rise in military spending, which between the first and the fourth budget submitted by President Carter amounts to more than 40 percent, with an increase of nearly the same magnitude scheduled through fiscal 1983, and spending then to top \$200 billion. These increases, budgeted before the Afghanistan inva-

sion, came or will have come in the presence of an overwhelming arsenal of conventional and nuclear armaments whose technological obsolescence, moreover, is ensured by enormous boosts in research and development expenditures (45 percent between fiscal 1978 and 1981). These increases reflect internal pressures far more than external ones, having been exacted by "hard-liners" in Congress, partly as a condition for ratifying SALT II and acceded to by President Carter from political weakness and opportunism.

Second, there is the decision to station several hundred medium-range nuclear and cruise missiles on the West European continent—another concession to the right. How was Moscow to construe this, considering that its own medium-range missiles had been targeted upon Western Europe for 20 years as an offset to America's "nuclear umbrella" over the area? Surely, not as an act meant to promote detente.

But perhaps the weightiest factor in this history, *i.e.*, in Moscow's decision to disrupt detente, has been the playing of the "China card." The restoration of normal diplomatic relations between Peking and Washington was surely desirable. But these relations have been gradually transformed to a point where they suggest increasingly close military policy links: by Washington's tolerance of China's attack on Vietnam and of China's support of the unspeakable Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, and more recently by Secretary Brown's visit of Chinese military installations.

The egregious danger of this game was well stated by Miles Kahler in an article in *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1979/80:

Soviet fears of encirclement should be taken seriously. From the Soviet point of view, China could represent the worst fears instilled in Wilhelmine Germany by the Franco-Russian alliance: irredentist claims, a rapidly expanding economic and military potential, the added explosive of racial fear. For Soviet leaders obsessed by Bismarck's *cauchemar des coalitions*, the China card is a nightmare that might drive them to extremes.

With nuclear missiles now to be stationed on the European continent; with U.S. defense spending rising rapidly, and U.S. naval forces massing in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean; with the military potential of China being inexorably strengthened—can it be expected that Moscow, a giant with feet of clay not unlike Japan in the 1930s, will not secure strategic advantage wherever it can be gained?

Yet, politically the worst dangers lie along the following three lines:

- First, the end, however temporary, of detente spells the repression of dissidence in Russia, for which detente represents an indispensable supply of oxygen, as well as the threat of repression of popular movements, quite possibly by Soviet troops in such countries as Poland.

- Second, the reelection of social democratic governments, particularly Schmidt's in Germany, is now put in question. Whatever one's criticism of such governments, they are by far the most humane now in office and include people who will at least be influenced by the sort of radical ideas espoused by such magazines as *Dissent*.

- Third, social regression in the U.S. will intensify, as amply evidenced by the two most recent federal budgets.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE United States and Russia is a struggle between two hegemonial powers that holds no promise but poses only vast dangers to the future of humanity. Karl Marx could write 127 years ago that "the question . . . is not whether the English had a right to conquer India, but whether we are to prefer India conquered by the Turk, by the Persian, by the Russian, to India conquered by the Briton" (*On Colonialism*, p. 81). The Briton, unlike the others, would be "laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia," thus regenerating Asian society. These foundations are themselves increasingly at risk, owing to militarization and bureaucratization; and the rise of native bourgeoisies, upon which Marx banked for the economic development of India and parliamentary governments, is prevented by the spread of military client regimes. Thus American hegemony is generally in no way preferable to the Russian kind; both must be opposed.

Democratic socialists must fight for detente, first because the now intensifying struggle between Russia and the U.S. threatens once again to become the most reactionary factor in political life. Equally important, detente promotes the forces of economic and social development in Eastern Europe and Russia, the foundation for any democratic socialist evolution there. In the final analysis, the Kremlin must base itself upon a society whose development is the source of its strength but also its undermining. Its power to project itself beyond Russia's border is thus, in the longer term, limited. It represents a totalitarian regime, but a decaying one. Detente is necessary to speed this decay. □

Joseph Clark

One is reluctant to comment about current and changing events, with a two-month lapse between writing and publication. But it is reasonably safe to appraise one aspect of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Soviet attitude to the kidnapping of American embassy personnel in Iran. That aspect is the continuity of Soviet policy. What one former American diplomat wrote about "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," shortly after World War II, is more cogent today than most recent analyses. Even more startling is how much more appropriate that 34-year-old analysis is than the revision of his views offered in George F. Kennan's *New York Times* Op-Ed article of February 1, 1980.

Though properly critical of the Administration's thundering talk of war Kennan joins Carter in expressing surprise about the invasion of Afghanistan. Kennan finds the Soviet action so "bizarre" that he is certain it lacked the approval of Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Gromyko. A hard-line move, such as the invasion, was likely, in Kennan's view, only upon the retirement of Brezhnev and other older Politbureau members. But now he's as astonished as the President said he was.

By contrast, the Kennan who was in Moscow early in 1946 sought to clear up the bewilderment in Washington caused by the intensified cold-war moves of the Soviet government. Most of Truman's administration was surprised by this abrupt turn of the Soviet leaders, after four years of comradeship-in-arms, which defeated the fascist Axis. So Kennan proceeded to explain what was constant in Soviet behavior. Kennan was not suggesting that there had been and would be no changes in Soviet policies. He knew, for example, how different Stalin was from Lenin and how much Stalin had altered the Soviet scene. But he also knew there was continuity between Lenin and Stalin and continuity going back to before the Bolshevik coup. It was this constant that Kennan tried to convey to the folks back in Washington who oscillated between periods when they would have liked to wipe the Soviets off the map and times when their approval of good old Uncle Joe induced a positive euphoria.

On February 22, 1946 Kennan sent an 8,000-word telegram from Moscow to Washington opening with a statement made by Stalin to a

delegation of American workers in Moscow in 1972. Said Stalin:

In the course of the further development of the international revolution there will emerge two centers of world significance: a socialist center, drawing to itself the countries which tend toward socialism, and a capitalist center, drawing to itself the countries that incline toward capitalism. Battle between these two centers for command of the world economy will decide the fate of capitalism and of communism in the entire world.

Nothing we've seen or heard from Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Gromyko, whether healthy or ill, suggests that they have discarded Stalin's homily. Kennan's 1946 telegram goes on to argue that the alliance against Hitler surely disproved all the trite Soviet dogmas about capitalist encirclement, the internal conflicts of capitalism, how international capitalist conflicts generate war and intervention against the Soviet Union, and the evils of Social Democracy, "the greatest enemy" of the working class. Why then, Kennan asks, have these theses been reinstated by the Soviets and placed at the center of their postwar policies? He answers:

It indicates that the Soviet party line is not based on any objective analysis of the situation beyond Russia's borders . . . that it arises mainly from inner-Russian necessities which existed before the recent war and exist today. . . .

At the bottom of the Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs is the traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity. . . . And they have learned to seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it. . . .

Soviet dogma views the "outside world as evil, hostile, and menacing," wrote Kennan. How tenacious that belief is was impressed on me again in a recent conversation with an elderly, highly intelligent, former member of the Communist party, who left it under the hammer blows of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and, above all, because of the virulence of Soviet anti-Semitism. While critical of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, my friend nevertheless "understood" it in the light of American machinations against the Soviet Union. "After all," he asserted, "didn't American troops land at Archangelsk after the Russian revolution, to overthrow the Soviet government?"

The Czarist scene in Russia seems so remote from the ideology of Marxism that the immediate question intrudes: how can one speak of continuity of attitude and behavior from old Russia to the

present? Kennan's interpretation of the Soviet uses of Marxism, contained in the "long telegram," stands up marvelously as an answer:

It was no coincidence that Marxism, which had smouldered ineffectively for half a century in Western Europe, caught hold and blazed for the first time in Russia. Only in this land which had never known a friendly neighbor or indeed any tolerant equilibrium of separate powers, either internal or international, could a doctrine thrive which viewed economic conflicts of society as insoluble by peaceful means. After establishment of the Bolshevik regime, Marxist dogma, rendered even more truculent and intolerant by Lenin's interpretation, became a perfect vehicle for the sense of insecurity with which Bolsheviks, even more than previous Russian rulers, were afflicted. In this dogma, with its basic altruism of purpose, they found justification for their instinctive fear of the outside world, for the dictatorship without which they did not know how to rule, for cruelties they did not dare not to inflict, for sacrifices they felt bound to demand. In the name of Marxism they sacrificed every single ethical value in their methods and tactics. Today they cannot dispense with it. It is the fig leaf of their moral and intellectual respectability. Without it they would stand before history, at best, as only the last of that long succession of cruel and wasteful Russian rulers who have relentlessly forced the country on to ever new heights of military power in order to guarantee external security of their internally weak regimes. That is why Soviet purposes must always be solemnly clothed in trappings of Marxism, and why no one should underrate the importance of dogma in Soviet affairs.

What then will the Soviets do? The Kennan of 1946 forecasts: "Internal policy devoted to increasing in every way strength and prestige of the Soviet state; intensive military-industrialization; maximum development of armed forces. . . ."

And externally, what will the Soviets do? The 1946 Kennan, the prescient Kennan, replied:

Wherever it is considered timely and promising, efforts will be made to advance the official limits of Soviet power. For the moment, these efforts are restricted to certain neighboring points conceived of here as being of immediate strategic necessity, such as Northern Iran, Turkey, possibly Bornholm. However, other points may at any time come into question, if and as concealed Soviet political power is extended to new areas. Thus a "friendly" Persian Government might be asked to grant Russia a port on the Persian Gulf.

Given what the Russians like to call "the relationship of forces," on Christmas day last year the Soviets moved into Afghanistan. And in the light of Soviet patterns of behavior, it is only

natural for them to seek a “friendly” government in Iran, also a warm-water port, and above all power to shut off the supply of oil to the West and to Japan. That the Russians felt menaced by a Moslem uprising in Afghanistan goes without saying. That they feared religious and political infections spreading to millions of Soviet Moslems is a certainty. That this can transform an invasion of a foreign country into a “defensive” move is the logic of Soviet “dialectics.”

The crucial question remains: is war inevitable with the Soviet Union, as it became inevitable with Hitler’s Germany, following Western appeasement of the Nazis and that ultimate of appeasement, the Nazi-Soviet pact? I think not. I think Soviet history reveals a pattern of moving out when the other centers of power in the world are either too weak or lack the will to oppose Soviet expansionism. Kennan argued, with firm reliance on the record of history, that Soviet power is quite different from Hitlerite Germany. Soviet power, he said in the “long telegram,” is “neither schematic nor adventurous. . . .” The Soviet Union “does not take unnecessary risks.” Though the Soviet Union, Kennan wrote, is “impervious to logic and reason . . . it is highly sensitive to the logic of force. . . . For this reason, it can easily withdraw—and usually does—when strong resistance is encountered at any point.” He added, “if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so.”

WHAT CAN WE DO in a world where both sides are armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons?

- First, what not to do. Kennan had sober advice, that the “greatest danger that can befall us . . . is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.” America, alas, did not heed that warning and did start along an imitative path when McCarthyism held sway. That weakened both America and the struggle against the real

Communist threat, the Soviet accretion of power in the world.

- Second, and more important than hydrogen bombs, is “the health and vigor of our own society.” Today this has to mean freeing ourselves from dependence on Middle East oil, strenuous efforts to solve the energy crisis, to curb inflation and ward off recession.

- Third, it does require a continued and more effective effort to secure the limitation, and more important, the reduction of nuclear armaments. This is not of advantage to us or the Soviets exclusively; it is self-interest and survival for both. SALT II, and even more urgently, SALT III, are in the national interest and in the interest of civilization, anywhere.

- Fourth, containment of Soviet expansionism requires, in my opinion, universal (including military) service because it is more democratic and effective than a mercenary army, which exploits the plight of the poor and of minorities.

The year after Kennan sent the “long telegram” he wrote the “X” article in *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947). Kennan then argued that “the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” In the *Foreign Affairs* article he made it clear that containment was a policy for peace, not war, because:

. . . the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power. . . .

We shouldn’t hold our breath while waiting for that eventuality, but it does seem to me an attainable goal by the 21st century, maybe sooner.

□

Sharif Arani

The Iranian Revolution: Year Zero

Iran's presidential election of January 25, 1980, which took place almost a year after the fall of the Shah in February 1979, and the insurrection in Tabriz that preceded the election by a few weeks may well come to be regarded as landmarks in the history of Iran's incipient revolution. These two events seem to indicate a transition from a primitive rebellion spread across an entire society to a political revolution. If so, the chronologically more convenient event, the election of Bani-Sadr, may be taken to mark the close of the Year Zero of the Iranian revolution.

Whether or not Bani-Sadr is justified in interpreting his election as the death of the clerical Islamic Republican party, there can be no doubt that his landslide victory in the face of a viciously slanderous campaign orchestrated by the turbaned ruling elite has reversed the trend toward clerical hegemony since August '79, whose course I covered in my previous article.¹ The popular vote dealt a severe blow to the enhanced domination of the clerical elite. It showed the inability of the Islamic Republican party—Khomeini's hope for his ideal one-party state—to conduct an effective campaign of mass mobilization. Meanwhile, the frequent accusations of "infiltration" by counterrevolutionary elements as well as mounting open abuse indicate that the two other organs on which the clerical regime rests, the Guardians of the Revolution and the Islamic Committees, have come into increasing disrepute. In his first press interview, Bani-Sadr declared his intention of abolishing the Islamic Committees and replacing the Guardians of the Revolution with a people's army.

¹ "Iran: From the Shah's Dictatorship to Khomeini's Demagogic Theocracy," in the Winter 1980 *Dissent*.

HOW ARE WE to analyze Bani-Sadr's victory in the unbelievably hasty presidential election, despite the opposition of the ruling clerical elite?

First and foremost, we must speak of the instinctive sagacity of the electorate, for once not constrained by the Supreme Leader to choosing between God and Satan. This immediately raises the question why Khomeini chose not to do so, which in turn brings us to a general consideration of his aims and motivation.

To the chagrin of his opponents, Khomeini has keenly monitored the political developments of the past year (his physician's one complaint is that the "exemplary patient" is too avid in reading the newspapers), and has proved himself to be a political realist of outstanding ability. Of his two major political aims, the establishment of a theocracy and the eradication of Western cultural influence, he has already achieved the first and by far the more important: he has secured the formal subjugation of the state to religious institutions as represented by him.

The new Constitution, ratified by the referendum of December 2-3, 1979, makes him the first Shi'ite Caesar-Pope in history, with virtually absolute power over men and responsibility only to God. Knowing this was not achieved without difficulty, Khomeini seems to have opted for the consolidation of this momentous gain rather than for a politically disastrous and as yet unfeasible program of systematic desecularization of the judiciary (which has, for the time being, been put under the firm *de jure* authority of the clergy anyway).

A policy of consolidation seems highly rational at this point. There is every indication

that Iran's turbaned Caesar has found a "second stratum" of lay servants to run the state and the ruined economy for him. This "second stratum" can be described in terms of Machiavelli's dichotomy as the stratum of "foxes"—at least as regards their pragmatic servility if not intelligence²—in comparison to the Shah's second stratum of "lions"—who could be so described as regards their ferocity if not courage.

This would-be second stratum is quite willing to render unto the turbaned Caesar what is Caesar's due—to tell the truth, the new Caesar's due does not appear onerous. The turbaned Caesar wears soft sandals and not military boots; an ailing octagenarian, he is not interested in the day-to-day administration of the state and the economy, which is far beneath his dignity and would, incidentally, make him responsible for actual performance; nor will he be opening Swiss bank accounts for himself or his family. What is more, the second stratum, once they start feeding from the public trough, could always buy their whiskey in the black market. Khomeini has decided to rest his authority squarely on the new theocratic Constitution and may well have decided not to prevent the possible withering away of the clerical structure of power,³ created by him in order to assure the continued paralysis of the state, pending its legal subjugation to supreme religious authority. Now that this goal has been reached, Khomeini seems prepared for the "big deal" with the prospective second stratum, a deal by and large on his terms.

To facilitate the big deal, and in realistic cognizance of the difficulties it encountered, Khomeini has greatly relented in his *Kulturkampf* against Westernized intellectuals. In a society dominated for some time by a bureaucratic state, diploma-holders enjoy considerable prestige, and Iran is no exception. (The three front runners for the presi-

dency put a great deal of emphasis on being Dr. Bani-Sadr, Dr. Madani, and Dr. Habibi; and those members of the turbaned ruling elite who possess doctorates, such as the late Ayatollah Mufattah and Ayatollah Beheshti, have also been wont to don their titles proudly.) Having precluded any political influence of the Westernized intellectuals over the masses, Khomeini is shrewd enough not to waste his scarce energy and political resources on an unpromising cultural campaign.

As a result, it seems most plausible for Khomeini to have decided to help Bani-Sadr put together an administrative-technocratic team to run the state and revive the economy for him. The clerical structures of power, of course, will not simply melt away. The stage is set for a prolonged political struggle, but one in which Khomeini could for the first time be expected to observe an attitude of some neutrality. And it is significant from our present point of view that in thus observing neutrality from his Olympian position *above* the political arena, Khomeini is less likely to insist on presenting all issues in a religious garb, and thus less likely to engage in a Manichaean obfuscation of their political texture.

Since Khomeini's Manichaean reduction of all politics to the Satanic black and the Islamic white has constituted the main obstacle to getting past primitive rebellion in the direction of a conscious articulation of political issues, it deserves a careful review. Early in November, Khomeini surprised everybody by suddenly overruling the Revolutionary Council, which had signaled its willingness to negotiate the release of American hostages with a mission headed by the former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. He forbade the entry of the mission and broadcast an unusually vituperative message to the Iranian nation. He thus launched his heroic campaign against the world-eating American imperialists. Though reckless, this move was undoubtedly Khomeini's most astute since his assumption of power in February '79.

The presence of the American parachutists

² The Ghotbzadehs and the Moinfars.

³ The reader will recall from the previous article that this parallel structure of power, existing independently of the state, consists of the Guardians of the Revolution, the Islamic Committees, and the Islamic Republican party and its influential organ, the *Islamic Republic*.

in Bahrain and the rumors of an imminent coup d'état may well have contributed to this crucial decision, but the subsequent course of events leaves room for little doubt that it was the first step in a well thought-out strategy by Khomeini. The second step was taken at the end of November, when Khomeini overruled the then acting Foreign Minister Bani-Sadr's decision to attend the meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations, which he had earlier asked for. Bani-Sadr resigned on November 28. On the following day, just three days before the referendum for Khomeini's new Constitution, the media reported a significant hardening of Iran's position in the conflict with the U.S.

Khomeini's anti-imperialist tactics bore fruit immediately, and he could harness the populist legitimism enhanced by it for a good purpose. Just about everyone, including Bani-Sadr and Bazargan, had been grumbling about the "improved" draft of the proposed Constitution, which gave the Imam absolute power without the slightest responsibility. But now, who could oppose the Constitution when doing so could only mean siding with Satan against God, with the imperialist plotters against the long-suffering nation and its revolutionary leader? Not only Bazargan's party but also the Jama (leftist Muslims) and the (Communist) Tudeh party declared themselves constrained to support the new Constitution in order not to jeopardize "the ongoing anti-imperialist struggle and the political line of the Imam"!

The Disinherited (the urban poor) would undoubtedly have voted for the new Constitution upon Khomeini's order, and their vote would have been enough to secure its ratification with a comfortable margin. What showed Khomeini's political acumen much more decisively was the sequence of events after the insurrection in Tabriz that immediately followed the referendum in the first week of December 1979 and can be said to have lasted until January 11, 1980.

This insurrection began as a primitive rebellion characterized by a pronounced populist legitimism. The first attempt to inject a rational content into it failed; but after a

month of continued struggle, populist legitimism was finally discarded and the opposition to Khomeini's regime assumed a fully conscious and explicit form.

Everyone expected trouble in Tabriz during and after the constitutional referendum. The Grand Ayatollah Shari'at-madari, the most eminent living Shi'ite jurist by expert consent and in my estimation, had spoken out against Khomeini's Constitution as an incoherent and self-contradictory piece of legal work on the eve of the referendum, indicating that he would therefore abstain from voting. (The irony of the situation can be fully appreciated only if we remember that Khomeini's extensive powers are formally justified as the sovereign prerogatives of the foremost *jurist*.) A general strike and demonstration in Tabriz were planned for Thursday, December 6, when an attack on Shari'at-madari's house in Qum and the abortive attempt to assassinate him a day earlier precipitated the matter. Tabriz rose in insurrection; the radio station and government buildings were taken over by the Shari'at-madari partisans. The following days witnessed demonstrations, counterdemonstrations, and numerous clashes between the supporters of the two Ayatollahs, all characterized by populist legitimism of the protesting party: the insurrectionists wanted Ghotbzadeh executed because of the vicious censorship he had imposed upon the National Radio and Television Network; they wanted the dictatorial Constitution repealed, but Khomeini, they said, was their Imam!

Of the troubled December days in Tabriz, I should like to choose one, the bleakest, for close scrutiny: Friday, December 7: the day that proved the faintness of the voice of reason in Iranian revolutionary politics and the obduracy of the deaf ears upon which it fell, and the day that vindicated the political astuteness of Khomeini's decision to prolong his "anti-imperialist" struggle by refusing to release the American hostages.

Shari'at-madari's followers had risen because of loyalty to the *person* of the Grand Ayatollah. Shari'at-madari's attempt to broaden the support for his protest movement by creating a democratic platform failed. On

Friday, December 7, an appeal from Hasan Nazih⁴—appealing to those who stood for democracy and freedom “to continue the struggle until the elimination of personal power, and of the despotism institutionalized by the new Constitution”—was broadcast three times from the captured radio station but fell on deaf ears.

By contrast, the same day witnessed the triumph of political unreason at the service of Khomeini. Tahir Ahmad-zadeh, a supporter of Mosaddeq and a revolutionary with impeccable credentials, addressed a large pro-Shari’at-madari gathering. He reminded the crowd that Khomeini was the champion of the Disinherited against the imperialist oppressors. For this reason, just like Mosaddeq before him, the Imam was being unconscionably vilified by the imperialist press and by the agents of American capitalism in Iran. Mosaddeq, too, had been compared to Hitler and accused of being a dictator when he nationalized the oil industry, thereby expropriating the British. The crowd was manifestly moved. Not one among them raised a voice to remind the speaker that Mosaddeq had no comparable Constitution introducing institutionalized despotism; nor was the speaker asked in what way the incarceration of unarmed hostages was comparable to the nationalization of the British-owned oil company in 1951. With whatever rational power they may have possessed under calmer circumstances totally eclipsed and with their emotions reigning supreme, the crowd took to the streets, repenting the betrayal of the Imam and accusing themselves of abandoning David in his struggle against the imperialist Goliath, as the people of Kufa had abandoned the martyred Imam Husayn in his struggle against the tyrannical Yazid.

Of the leftist groups, the Tudeh party and the Mujahideen were both legitimist and intensely loyal to the Imam. Owing to their boundless political wisdom, they knew from

the beginning that the Tabriz insurrection was the work of Zionist-imperialist plotters and the agents of capitalism, and so they opposed it. The Marxist Fedayeen, having supported the Tabriz insurrectionary movement at the beginning, suddenly reversed their position and joined the anti-imperialist followers of the Imam. Only the Maoists showed enough political maturity not to be fooled by the pro-Khomeini party.

The Kurdish Democratic party decided not to support the insurrection for sounder reasons. Negotiations with the central government for Kurdish autonomy were in progress. The Kurds had good reason to expect generous terms—which were in fact proposed to them in mid-December—and plausibly feared that the collapse of Khomeini’s Islamic republic would bring in a nationalistic or chauvinistic government in Teheran that would be less favorably disposed toward them. As Secretary of the Kurdish Democratic party Qasemlu put it in an interview with *Le Monde* (December 18, ’79), “Whatever the character of the regime, it is less its ideology than the relations of force that will decide the outcome of the conflict. This is why I do not exclude a compromise [with Khomeini’s regime] acceptable to the Kurdish people.” In other words, its reactionary, totalitarian Constitution notwithstanding, Khomeini’s theocratic anarchy was preferable to a strong, nationalistic central government, be it liberal or conservative—from the Kurdish point of view.

The ruthless counteroffensive by the pro-Khomeini forces began immediately after the repentance of the neo-Kufan betrayers of the Just Imam. On Monday, December 10, the pro-Khomeini militants, aided by the Communists, attacked and recaptured the radio station. In the month of unrest and bloodshed that followed, Shari’at-madari firmly withstood relentless intimidation and virtual house arrest, calmly but clearly pointing out how the Khomeini regime was indiscriminately using the Zionist-imperialist conspiracy theory to stifle all opposition with a view to the eventual creation of a one-party state. Meanwhile, the people of Tabriz were finding

⁴ The former director of the Iran National Oil Company, dismissed for not displaying the proper subservience toward the Mullahs, especially Khomeini’s son-in-law.

out the hard way how costly their profession of loyalty to Khomeini—their populist legitimism—was; and how it was time and again calculatedly exploited by the pro-Khomeini proponents of “unity” to disarm and defeat them. By the end of December, a traveler from Tabriz reported that not a single portrait of Khomeini remained undefiled in the city.

On January 11, 1980, the Guardians of the Revolution captured the headquarters of the pro-Shari’at-madari Republican party of the Muslim People. Eleven of its occupants were summarily executed. Shari’at-madari wisely decided to lose a round and wait for a time of clearer polarization. But the calm that immediately descended upon Tabriz could deceive no one. The correspondent of *Le Monde* who visited Tabriz two days later could only find Shari’at-madari’s posters and portraits. The Khomeini sympathizers were being forced to take down his portraits and no conciliatory pro-Khomeini gestures were tolerated. Already by the first week of January the Azerbaijanis had stopped mincing their words: the fateful slogan *marg bar Khomeini* (“Death to Khomieni”) was being heard and inscribed on a number of walls. The ice was broken; the protesters were primitive rebels no more.

Among other things, the election of Bani-Sadr proved that the “anti-Zionist-imperialist” coinage, the weapon used to defeat Shari’at-madari and Nazih, had become ineffective. Liberalism with its connotations of consumerism, capitalism, and moral laxity *did* destroy Admiral Madani’s chances. But detailed and virulent accusations

of Bani-Sadr’s alleged long-standing ties with Zionism did not find a receptive audience. He chose to ignore them. So did the electorate.

Despite his massive electoral victory, Bani-Sadr came under immediate assault from all corners (especially the clerical right and the Communist left) even before he had the chance to say or do anything. He was now variously described as “an egocentric with a thirst for power,” “incompetent,” “mis-elected,” “an adventurer,” a “representative of the Bazaar [traditional bourgeoisie],” an “opportunist” in foreign policy, and “an enemy of the clergy.” These tendentious attacks notwithstanding, Bani-Sadr’s impressive mandate has overnight endowed him with the victor’s charisma. It remains to be seen whether he can capitalize on this charisma by a quick assertion of authority and by embarking on his proposed developmental programs effectively. Nevertheless, even if, as a part of the revolutionary political process, Bani-Sadr is to be sacrificially slaughtered on the presidential pedestal by a people denied the superior satisfaction of regicide, the revolutionary political process has at least begun.

If my analysis is correct, a large admixture of real political issues will, from now onward, be added to the Ayatollah’s phantasmagorical struggle with the imperialist Satan. At long last, at the close of the Year Zero of the revolution, there is a glimmer of hope for the future of Iran. □

March 21

As we are going to press, the provisional results of the election for the National Assembly indicate that, to Bani-Sadr’s great disappointment, the Islamic Republican party is very far from dead. The stage now is set for a prolonged political struggle, a struggle into which Khomeini inevitably will be drawn despite his poor health. □

Walter Dean Burnham

American Politics in the 1980s

The United States is clearly in the midst of a “conservative revival.” As usual in such cases of “mood shift,” the revival is spearheaded by intellectuals—particularly those who cluster around the Committee on the Present Danger and *Public Interest*. Symptoms include the California tax revolts of 1978 and 1980 (Proposition 13 and “Jarvis II,” an initiative aimed at cutting the state income tax); the adoption by two dozen state legislatures of a constitutional-amendment proposal requiring balanced federal budgets; the string of victories by very conservative Republicans in Southern and Western Senate elections; and, last but by no means least, Jimmy Carter’s position as the most conservative Democrat to sit in the White House since Grover Cleveland.

Add to these signs of change another and far weightier one: the crisis in international relations unleashed by the seizure of the American embassy in Iran, reinforced by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In early 1980 both these events are “swamping” the election campaign, scrambling all kinds of political calculations that seemed valid as late as November 1979. Whatever the long-term consequences, in the short term this international upheaval reinforces our domestic “conservative revival.”

The thought occurs that the Republican party might capitalize on the situation, and perhaps even displace the Democrats as the majority party. It is not the first time in recent years that such speculations have arisen. Back in the late 1960s, conservative intellectuals and politicians briefly thought they had discovered an “emerging Republican majority,” arising from an imminent realignment.

Kevin Phillips, arguing this thesis, traced the roots of this supposed counterrevolution to a white lower-middle and working-class backlash against the Great Society and its non-white beneficiaries, disagreeable Vietnam War protesters, even more disagreeable and largely affluent college students, and, perhaps most disagreeable of all, conspicuous members of the counterculture.¹ This new Republican majority, then, would be created from the “silent majority’s” rejection of these outgroups, coupled with Southern conservatism, patriotism, and racism.

Things did not work out that way. The realignment failed to realign; the supposedly emergent Republicans of 1968 became the submergent Republicans of 1974. The disruptive forces Phillips identified were real enough. They were quite sufficient to elect Richard Nixon twice, to give George Wallace his brief moment, and to rupture the Democratic party. In the end they could not prevent the election of Jimmy Carter or even his capture of all but one of the ex-Confederate states. Yet, at no time did they fundamentally change the voters’ underlying attitudes—whether one looks at the distribution of party identification, stances on economic questions, or propensity to vote for Democrats elsewhere on the ticket, even in the Nixon landslide of 1972.

It is not too difficult to see why. Some years ago Donald E. Stokes, then of the University of Michigan’s Survey Research Center, identified two major types of issues in campaigns.² He spoke of “position issues” and “valence issues.” “Position issues,” Stokes said, are distinguished by the existence of two more or less clearly defined sides; on the other

hand, what makes “valence issues” so useful to politicians of a minority party is precisely that they do *not* have two sides. An overwhelming majority of the population either supports or opposes a given valence issue. If these minority-party entrepreneurs can find a way to link the majority party to the “wrong” (i.e., unpopular) side of a significant valence (or “social”) issue, the prospects of victory are much enhanced. By 1952, for example, Republicans had lost each of the preceding five presidential elections, defeated largely on the position-issue axis forged out of the Great Depression and the New Deal. Their successful 1952 strategy centered around their choice of a widely esteemed, essentially nonpartisan war hero and their skillful employment of such “valence issues” as “Korea, Communism, and corruption.”

AAttempts to build coalitions by using backlash against minority outgroups are closely linked to “valence-issue” strategies. Victory seems assured if the large majority under stress swings against blacks, Catholics, Communists, or other opportune targets. All this has a long history in American politics. The population is immensely heterogeneous by comparative standards. The rapid pace of socioeconomic change produces serious individual and group stress that, under the right circumstances and with skilled leadership, can provide intensely combustible materials for electoral warfare. Well-known examples include the Native Americans of the 1840s and 1850s, the Klan, Prohibition, and Catholic issues of the 1920s and, in part, the Great Red Scares that followed American participation in both World Wars. Similarly, the Nixon-Agnew campaigns of '68 and '72 hammered with great success at a variety of outgroup and negative-valence themes.

Yet, there is a curious impermanence to such movements. They are, as it were, “luxury products” in electoral politics. They come to the fore either when the leading position-issue cleavages have been severely eroded with the passage of time, or when (as in the mid-1850s) they have not yet been conclusively defined.

More than a century ago, Horace Greeley pointed to this fragility in his analysis of the anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant Know-Nothings. Writing in 1855, when the Know-Nothing party seemed to be taking everything by storm, Greeley observed:

It would seem as devoid of the elements of persistence as an anti-Cholera or anti-Potato-Rot party, and unlikely long to abide the necessary attrition of real and vital difference of opinion among its members with respect to the great questions of foreign and domestic policy which practically divide the country. These must soon dissolve its compact organization, distract its councils, “And, like the baseless fabric of a vision, / Leave not a wrack behind.”³

Greeley’s forecast was right on the money. Scarcely a year after he wrote it, the Know-Nothing party had disintegrated as a national force, ruptured by the massive cleavage over slavery that ran right through both its organization and American politics as a whole.

Something of the sort also happened in the mid-1970s, as the Vietnam War receded into history and economic difficulties unprecedented since the Great Depression came into view. Confronting the issues, the candidates, and voter attitudes of 1976, one might well have thought oneself in a different country from the America of 1968 or 1972. Both foreign-policy and social-issue questions declined to the lowest level of intensity in public attitudes since 1948, perhaps even earlier. The national scene now was dominated by the malfunctioning of the economy and by such issues left over from Watergate as Ford’s pardon of Nixon. This was not good news for Republicans. Ford was the first incumbent president to be defeated since Herbert Hoover in 1932. Moreover, at other electoral levels the Republican party had scarcely recovered from the near-record low to which it had fallen in 1974. Needless to say, it was particularly bad news for those conservatives who had hoped to build a new Republican majority on such flimsy and ephemeral foundations as those provided by “valence” or social-issue politics.

Once, very long ago, the Republican party

enjoyed clear dominance. Decisively confirmed in the realigning election of 1896, this dominance lasted with little interruption until 1932. It lasted as long as the Republicans could command majority support on the main position-issue sets of the day. These issues centered on a sectional cleavage over modernization under industrial-capitalist auspices, though much else of importance was going on as well. Arrayed against each other were the country's "backward" primary-producer areas in the South and West, and the "advanced" industrial heartland, the Northeastern and near-Midwestern Metropole. Republicans projected themselves to the electorate as the "modernizing party," the party of progress and affluence, and their Democratic opponents as backward-looking, not competent to manage the affairs of a modern state, and "responsible" for the Depression of 1893-97.

Laissez-faire and the Republican majority perished in the flames of an even worse economic disaster. After 1932 both the dominant political ideology and the activities of government were sweepingly changed, though both remained well within our Lockean-liberal "tradition." A new, interventionist *political capitalism* was born. The state and its managers took responsibility for permanent involvement in the workings of the economy, the development of a welfare "safety net" for the victims of the capitalist business cycle, and the creation of new organizations of countervailing power, such as the industrial unions in the CIO. This displacement was not the work of a day: from beginning to end, the budgets from 1933-34 through 1941 classified all New Deal relief expenditures as temporary, and not until 1946 did Congress pass an Employment Act that made the federal government assume some formal responsibility for the elimination of mass unemployment.

The full-fledged claimant state we know today was a still later creation, of the 1960s and not of the 1930s. But the realignment of values, expectations, and political parties was striking enough, even in the early years. Out of these changes emerged the modal public-

opinion structure described by Lloyd Free and Hadley Cantril in 1967.⁴ American voters are arrayed not on one attitudinal dimension but two: ideological and operational. Ideologically they are predominantly conservative, regularly producing large majorities against "Big Government." Operationally they are liberals, just as regularly "voting" for specific programs that require government spending—particularly those from which they expect to benefit personally. However messy this may be from a logical point of view, such an opinion structure is admirably suited to support a nonsocialist but interventionist state that deals in the currency of particularized benefits.

The persistent Republican problem has been that its elites have never been able as a whole to accept this post-laissez-faire dispensation. For many years, the conservatives of this conservative party operated on the assumption that there was a "silent conservative majority" out there—somewhere—just waiting for a choice rather than an echo: a theory conclusively disproved in 1964 for reasons clear enough to public-opinion specialists. Nor did the Eisenhower era and the politics of Nixon's 1968 and '72 campaigns make up for this *institutional* ill-adaptation to the modern political order. Presidential victories have come and gone, but support in the electorate for a Republican self-identification has fallen from nearly two-fifths in 1940 (only 4 points behind the Democrats) to little more than one-fifth (about 20 points behind) in the late 1970s.

One of the regular dynamics of politics seems to be that as a party shrinks, the influence of its hard-core elements grows within it. The hard-core Republicans are very, very conservative. Not surprisingly, substantial parts of the American business elite and the affluent upper middle classes have recently been taking their political business elsewhere. Sophisticated Trilateralism has migrated from the Rockefeller Republicans to a Democratic administration headed by Jimmy Carter. Academic intellectuals now generally—if perhaps too easily—write off the GOP as representing only a parochial,

declining-sector plus new-money brand of capitalist politics. Democratic presidents from John Kennedy to Jimmy Carter choose from the same pool of "serious men" that Republicans have tapped to manage the most pressing problems of the American elite, notoriously in the foreign-policy arena. No matter that this closed circle is still closed, no matter that these "serious men" have made a disastrous mess of things: you do not need Republicans in office to keep the circle closed and the range of policy choices narrowed. After all, the interests of the top elite as they perceive them will be protected well enough anyway—and perhaps all the better with Democrats running the transfer-payment state they believe in, and thus promoting social peace at the bottom of the system.

UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, such reflections would have looked much more plausible than they do now. A further consideration of the problem is thus in order, beginning with two obvious facts.

- First, both the domestic and world systems are dynamic and historically contingent, not static and eternally defined.
- Second, the two are now so interpenetrated that neither politicians nor scholars can any longer profitably deal with them in isolation. The upheaval in the Middle East has resulted in Jimmy Carter's being born yet once again, so far as the Russians are concerned. Similarly, the whole 1980 election campaign will deal with foreign-policy and imperial-defense issues to a degree that scarcely could have been imagined before November 4, 1979. This and other signs of deep crisis involve important changes in the arena of conflict that may well reopen the question, "Who needs Republicans anyway?"

We have already considered the options generally available to the leaders of a minority party and dismissed two. "Valence-issue" politics can lead to ad hoc victory but—as the political economics of the Nixon years demonstrated—to no fundamental changes. Similarly, there are excellent reasons why a conservative minority party cannot simply lift itself up by its bootstraps and come forth with

a set of position issues so compelling that a general political breakthrough ensues.

- There is a third but relatively weak option, depending on two large "ifs." If the substructure of politics is to some extent dominated by class polarity, and if the basic issues of most campaigns are economic, then it would be possible for conservatives to score gains even without basic change with regard to the underlying position issues. This could happen if there was so large a withdrawal of lower-class elements from the voting population that the remaining, more affluent fragment could be won by traditional conservative appeals. As we shall see, some such disappearance has been going on during the past two decades. Congressional Republicans have been successful in thwarting efforts to liberalize electoral law and reduce procedural barriers surrounding the ballot box. Yet, theirs is essentially a passive role. Declines in the participation rate depend crucially on what the *majority party* does or fails to do in order to mobilize the half of the electorate that now forms "the party of nonvoters."

- Finally, the minority party can be propelled into majority status when a sharp crisis suddenly discloses how much the foundations of the domestic and international order have been changing and how irrelevant divisions over older position issues have become. Such events have been quite rare in American history. Still, they have formed the only historical route through which so sweeping a reorganization of the electoral market has occurred. Thus, if we inquire into the prospects for such a reorganization in the foreseeable future, we must attempt to evaluate changes in collective and individual existence whose effects could sweep away the accepted order of political capitalism and replace it with something else. To this we now turn.

The state is primarily in business to promote capital accumulation and to maintain social harmony and legitimacy. Political capitalism was created out of the necessity to do both, following the collapse in 1929 of

corporate self-regulation. Political capitalism was further consolidated when, with the suicide of Europe in World War II, a polar international confrontation—both in ideology and in *Realpolitik*—saw the launching of the Cold War and the creation of the American (quasi-) empire. Throughout the advanced industrial-capitalist world, “growthmanship” and the construction of expensive welfare states became the twin pillars of postwar public policy. The incentive for this was obvious: at all costs, the tremendous social conflicts and deadly international anarchy that erupted in the 1930s had to be avoided if the system was to survive. Assuming sufficient economic growth, the surplus thus generated could achieve military superiority over the Soviets, pay for the welfare state, and lead to rising affluence in the private sector and, moreover, do all these good things at the same time.

These objectives were achieved with spectacular success. An enormous, worldwide boom—unprecedented in both length and magnitude—unfolded from 1945 until about 1970. The secret of achieving sustained capitalist growth, increasing social harmony and a relatively stable order in the world seemed to have been found. That persistent liberal utopia, “the end of ideology,” seemed at last on the verge of realization.

This boom, of course, had its own contradictions; we can discuss only some of the more important ones here. First, the 1945-70 period was optimal for the growth of oligopoly capitalism from its national bases into a full-fledged multinational stage. In some respects, the multinational corporations may be said to have created the first true world economic market. Going wherever profit would be greatest, their operations in time led to a fateful compromising of essential national interests in the states of their origin—see the most obvious example in the energy-automotive sectors, where by 1980 the United States had become dependent on external sources for half of its oil supply. American leadership has done little or nothing to arrest this development, much less reverse it even

after the embargo-OPEC-price crisis of 1973-74.

The immense growth of competition between European and Japanese firms and domestic American corporations for consumer markets, especially within the United States, presents problems of comparable difficulty. Our free-trade policies form an integral part of imperial economic management. They were created and have been sustained by acute memories of the role that protectionism has played in wrecking the international economic and political order during the 1930s. A return to Smoot-Hawley tariff schedules would probably create comparable devastation, particularly in Japan and West Germany. Yet, without protection, vitally important sectors of the domestic American economy were seriously undermined by the late 1970s. As this process continues in the 1980s, and it will, we can expect protectionist, national-capitalist candidacies to emerge; as indeed has already happened with John Connolly—significantly, on the Republican side.

This brings us to another major legacy of the Great Boom of 1945-70. This boom was largely fueled by immense increases in consumer spending, and in the mass expectations of an affluent, middle-class living style. The ramifications of these changes have been exceptionally far-reaching; two are of particular interest here. Suburbanization spread on a massive scale. This involved a radical dispersion of urban populations and industry, made possible solely by the existence of cheap private transportation and cheap, apparently limitless energy. Dispersion was more extensively carried out in the United States than anywhere else in the Western world, and most completely in the rapidly growing Sunbelt regions. With time, this process gave rise to the famous “urban crisis.” Yet, far more formidable problems surfaced when the energy crisis hit in the mid-1970s. If and when it becomes necessary to impose World War II-style gasoline rationing, we will rapidly learn that the population is much less efficiently distributed than it was in 1941, and that public transportation will be

far less capable of absorbing the load than it was in '41. Even without the necessity for rationing, the cost of transportation in so dispersed an environment will constitute a drag on overall economic performance far outweighing its counterparts in Japan or Western Europe—the more so as American fuel prices converge with those in Europe and in Japan.

CLOSELY LINKED WITH the rise in consumer spending and expectations is the increasingly difficult relationship between debt and saving. Naturally, much public policy during the Great Boom was oriented toward promoting consumption and, at best, failing to encourage the saving from which capital accumulation is largely derived. In this favorable environment, the corporate sector went into debt on a scale rarely if ever seen in our economic history. It also promoted ever-easier credit terms for consumers so that inventory could be profitably moved. The American economy is now a “debt economy,” with the burdens of carrying this debt rising sharply since the death of the boom in the early 1970s. Profitable capital accumulation once again becomes visible as a key problem in capitalist economics, and in the 1970s it was joined by a dramatic slump in industrial productivity. In a no-growth situation, capital accumulation can be pursued only at the expense of consumption, both private and public. The contradictions here are obvious. They are reflected in part by the conservative intellectuals’ rediscovery of the market, and a parallel rediscovery by other intellectuals of Marxist critiques of capitalism.

If expectations of privately generated affluence were sharply raised by the Great Boom, still more were expectations involving the public sector’s cornucopia-like output. One important aspect of booms is “boom psychology”: the longer they last, the more people assume that they have become eternal and act accordingly. This psychology often takes extreme forms in the “go-go” years before the end—from the mad stock-market speculations of 1928-29 to the rushes into securities and real-estate speculation that

marked the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is also in such eras that the state’s leaders are likely to attempt to “complete” their task of promoting social harmony among the mass of the population.

During the heyday of laissez-faire, this took such forms as Herbert Hoover’s classically misplaced prediction of 1928 about chickens in pots and cars in garages—all, of course, to be provided by a beneficent private sector under cheerful Republican guidance. Of course, the quest for social harmony was pursued very differently during the boom of the 1960s than it had been 40 years earlier: in the meantime, the interventionist state of political capitalism had come into being. There were more than enough problem areas, intensified by the boom’s very existence—and these, like the plight of ghetto blacks, were now to receive “solutions” not only for domestic political reasons but sometimes for imperial ones as well.

Thus, there was a fundamental change in the volume and, to a large extent, the very nature of domestic public-sector activities after the death of John F. Kennedy in 1963. In many respects, this change was far greater in both its impact and implications than the New Deal had been. As even the most cursory inspection of pre-1963 budgets will show, the public sector of Eisenhower’s time looks as nearly “prehistoric” to us as Hoover’s. After ’63, new programs initiated the major redesigning and extension of such old ones as Social Security, and new claimants produced “entitlements” in a flow so powerful that it continued unabated right through the Republican presidential era of 1969-77. It continues still. Afficionados of the federal budget know that for all practical purposes a large part of it is out of anyone’s reach on a year-to-year basis. These mandated expenditures, apart from servicing the national debt, are overwhelmingly in the domestic social-harmony and transfer-payment segments. These “uncontrollables” formed 65 percent of the whole budget a decade ago, in Nixon’s time. The “uncontrollable” share of Carter’s 1981 budget now stands at 76 percent.⁵

Forgotten along the way—because it was assumed that skilled Keynesian economists could “fine-tune” the economy while the interventionist state guaranteed eternal growth—was the bottom line. Promises could only be kept on condition that the boom did continue forever. Without a constantly growing surplus, the modern welfare state cannot be supported at levels that the public has been taught to expect. If the surplus stops growing—even more, if it disappears—retrenchment is as *practically* inevitable as it becomes *politically* hazardous for those in office.

Well, the surplus did stop growing. It stopped especially after the revolution in the world political economy that was initiated with the oil embargo and OPEC price control in 1973-74. At the beginning of the 1980s, real discretionary income per worker had *declined* 9 percent since 1970 and 18 percent since 1973. The cost of basic necessities had risen 110 percent from 1970 and 80 percent from 1973.⁶ Household and corporate debt stood close to, if not above, the record highs of 1974. Increases in American productivity fell to the lowest in the capitalist world, were even lower than those in Britain. The inflation rate reached double-digits, and as the 1980s begin there is little or no relief in sight. One might think that this dismal situation would produce some leftish reaction against an economy that, after all, has not lost its capitalist character. But we find instead the “conservative revival,” which represents the best structurally based hope the Republicans have had in many decades. How to explain this?

First, there is the immense growth of the state since the Great Depression. And this virtually ensures that the public sector, much more than the private, will be widely held responsible for increasing discomfort—and for two reasons, ideological and operational. On the ideological plane, there still is no room for a coherent socialist opposition to the liberal individualism that has always dominated American political culture. This “liberal tradition” stacks the deck against the

public sector in its domestic role, and it creates serious problems of legitimating that role in direct proportion as it expands. Accordingly, its intrusions and still more its mistakes will be much less tolerated than will those of any part of the private sector—except, perhaps, in the case of the oil companies. This quasi-permanent bias is an inevitable by-product of hegemony in the cultural-ideological domain, particularly when—as in the United States—that hegemony is to all practical purposes uncontested. In the 1930s, the state came to be seen as an indispensable vehicle for national economic salvation; in the 1980s, it is seen as a central part of the problem.

Operationally, the public sector’s interventions for the sake of maintaining social harmony tend cumulatively to produce their opposite. This is not just an American problem; these days it is present in most Western political economies. But it is peculiarly exacerbated in the United States. The American Constitution of 1787 was explicitly designed to prevent the emergence of an internally sovereign and accountable political power structure. James Madison quite properly referred to it as “our feudal constitution.”

We do not have space here to describe all that happens when a hugely increased load of demand and output is processed through such a power centrifuge, but merely for a few brief propositions. The traditional partisan channels connecting rulers and ruled, across the great fault lines at the center known as “separation of powers,” decay. As they wither, the fragmented pluralism this constitutional structure encourages keeps growing. Political executives, legislators, and judges have every incentive to go into business for themselves and for their clients; and they do. This becomes increasingly obvious to the public, especially to the unorganized “great middle” sectors, as more and more groups organize and get their pieces of the public pie. In consequence, a generalized crisis of legitimacy develops while the surplus declines. The “cultural contradictions of capitalism”—its persistent tendency to corrode general-interest bonds and to emphasize

short-run personal gain—become the core of an explicitly political problem.⁷ Finally, we find a public sector that really does share some features with feudal regimes. It becomes widely, and not inaccurately, perceived as being both feeble and oppressive at the same time. If the contemporary American state is under such widespread attack, one important reason is that it is the kind of state it is.

The growing “conservative revival” is no less fueled by permanent inflation of socially damaging proportions—an inflation virtually inevitable so long as the forces that simultaneously promote economic decay and an elective political feudalism continue to exist. For declines in the general level of well-being must occur so long as these forces predominate. This is particularly true of the enormous transfer of wealth to the OPEC countries, akin to the reparations exacted from Germany by the Allies after 1919, but of vastly greater magnitude.

Granted the electoral incentives, it is politically almost impossible to “disentitle” any significant part of the population. After all, more than 50 million government checks are at stake. It is also highly undesirable from the government’s own perspective to have a situation in which, at the private-sector level, there would be actual, visible, and widespread pay cuts. Were the currency stabilized, both would be required under present and immediately foreseeable economic conditions. So the promises are kept, but the people who do the promising have the unique power under the Constitution to regulate the value of the units of account used to fulfill those promises. It also seems that people are much more quiescent when their real disposable income declines while nominal income increases than they would be if they received pay cuts totaling, say, the 18 percent by which discretionary income has declined from 1973 to 1980. Finally, and most important, the inflationary “solution” permits the government to enjoy the benefits of “tax creep,” as increases in nominal income push people into higher income-tax brackets. This becomes even more important for our rulers as they contemplate the military spending a Cold

War II would entail. For unlike the situation in the last Cold War, this additional expenditure on arms will have to be added to the top of a budget, now well over \$600 billion, three-quarters of which is locked into domestic “uncontrollable” expenditures.

This solution would be near-perfect from the state’s point of view were it not for certain unfortunate consequences of inflation. One is that inflation tends to rot the social order of capitalism in direct proportion to its magnitude. It can, for example, seriously compromise the pursuit of capital-accumulation strategies by diverting funds from investment in securities and speculation in Krugerrands, and by even further discouraging savings and encouraging immediate consumption. More generally, inflation stimulates an ever-more bitter struggle among organized fragments of the population to use whatever market power or political clout they have to shove the burden of declining real income onto others.

Carried to its logical extreme under conditions of hyperinflation, this can lead to truly Hobbesian social conflicts, a war of all against all such as historians of the Weimar period have described in vivid detail. *Sauve qui peut* becomes the order of the day, the only principle of social intercourse. Even at the far lower inflation rate that prevails in the United States today, inflation coupled with declining real income prompts an increasingly desperate and widespread search by the middle classes for ways out. As California real-estate owners found with Proposition 13, cutting back on the public sector can give immediate relief. But the local public sector is much more accessible to such revolts than the national. The federal government continues insistently to pursue “tax creep” fiscal strategies to keep its own entitlement structure more or less intact—ensuring that these efforts at relief will be redoubled in the years immediately ahead. The victims, at all levels, will be the poor and other dependent populations, particularly schoolchildren; but schoolchildren do not vote, and the poor don’t vote in anything approximating their true numbers.

WE NOW TURN TO the matter of electoral participation, since its dynamics give additional support to the "conservative revival." Some recent studies, notably by Douglas Hibbs, have identified a clear class dimension affecting the public-policy choices governments have made in the recent past.⁸ Two broad conclusions are relevant here. First, the greater the strength of the organized left in the electoral market, the larger the postwar growth in the welfare state has tended to be, though somewhat less so in the United States than elsewhere. Second, opinion data reveal that working-class people are more worried about losing their jobs than about inflation, while worry about inflation is much stronger among middle-class people.

It follows that a political system with *no* organized working-class left will be marked by heavy abstentions among the lower classes; that the active electorate will thus be significantly more middle-class than the population at large; and that there will be, comparatively, a tendency for the electoral market and public policy to reflect a higher tolerance of unemployment and a lower tolerance of inflation than if the lower classes organized and participated. Obviously, as inflation has become a much more acute problem than it was when these studies were conducted, a different set of findings might well exist. Even so, we suspect that if a "conservative revival" were to occur under more acute inflationary pressure, the quite extreme class skew in the electoral market would maximize the chances for this revival to prevail.

We may not be far from a description of actual conditions in the United States today. Throughout this century participation among the American lower classes has been significantly lower than in virtually all other Western polities. This class differential, not surprisingly, was notably reduced during and for some time after the New Deal realignment of the 1930s. But, since 1960, turnout (outside of the very special case of the South in the aftermath of voting-rights legislation) has sharply plummeted from the relatively mediocre levels of the 1940-60 period.

Geographically, participation has fallen especially severely in metropolitan areas, and most of all in their cores. In 1978, for example, turnout for the gubernatorial election in New York State reached a 150-year low, 38.5 percent of the potential electorate, even lower than it had been in the gubernatorial election of 1810 when nearly three-fifths of the potentially eligible population was disfranchised for failure to meet a property qualification! In '78 it was, of course, lowest of all in New York City. Sociologically, this decline in post-1960 participation levels has been particularly concentrated among working-class Americans who already vote least. Thus, by 1976, blue-collar and service workers constituted only 48.5 percent of the active electorate, but fully three-quarters of the "party of nonvoters."⁹

Nor can the abysmal turnouts of the 1970s be discounted by the enfranchisement of the 18- to 20-year-old age group in 1971. True, participation rates in this group are more than 50 percent lower than among their West German counterparts. But this age cohort added only between 6-8 percent to the U.S. population base. It is trivial to show that even if they were altogether excluded from that base in computing turnout rates, this would increase the nominal turnout rate by less than 2 percent. The post-1960 decline and its concentration among the lower classes of American society are thus real enough. And, if blacks have a generally lower turnout rate than whites, this too is overwhelmingly a matter of class.

To repeat, conservatives profit from this huge participation skew in a variety of ways, but theirs is not the active role in creating it. Proximately, it is what the supposed representatives of non-middle-class Americans, the Democratic party and the trade unions, have done and especially what they have failed to do that has made the larger contribution. More remotely, this huge "hole" in the active electorate is largely the artifact of uncontested hegemony and its effects on political consciousness.

One can hardly conclude a discussion of the postboom situation and its effects on our

domestic politics without reference to the so fundamentally changed international situation. The boom and the Cold War were inseparably linked to America's ascendancy, and both created and maintained American quasi-sovereignty in an essentially Hobbesian international arena. But the 1970s began with the unilateral American abrogation of key features of the 1944 Bretton Woods monetary agreement. This was required by the deterioration of American economic supremacy in the non-Communist world. It ended with the seizure of American embassy personnel by Iranian revolutionaries and with Soviet aggression in Afghanistan, following a long period of growth in the U.S.S.R.'s military capacity. The latter in particular appears to confirm the acute misgivings among conservatives about American power and "national will." The invasion has served as an admirable accelerator for these misgivings. Both upheavals are linked to the utter dependence of the industrial-capitalist world on Persian Gulf oil. To a much greater extent than almost anyone realizes, the United States, dependent on external sources for half its oil, has lost the capacity to pursue a genuinely independent foreign policy this side of a nuclear war. Conservatives are the least likely people to attempt a rigorous inquest as to how this fatal dependence was created, by whom, and for whose benefit. But they will profit nevertheless, at least in the short term.

The probable consequences of this decay in the American empire's control over international economic and political life now are visible. We may well expect the reinstitution of the draft on both economic-cost and geopolitical grounds, and very large "catch-up" expenditures on the military. Both will probably have unsuspected price tags. The draft will be more widely resisted than it was during the Korean War. Above all, the addition of huge supplemental defense expenditures to the present budget structure, with all its "uncontrollables," will also trouble a much more problematic American economy. To the extent that these expenditures go up without major cuts elsewhere, the danger of

hyperinflation becomes more real than during the Korean or Vietnam wars. Not only does this suggest that the "guns-versus-butter" stage may be reached surprisingly soon; it also suggests that, if the international situation continues to deteriorate, something very akin to "war capitalism" is likely to emerge as our dominant survival strategy.

The reader at this point may justifiably say that even if all the foregoing is an accurate assessment, it still doesn't tell us very much about how a "conservative revival" will help the Republicans. After all, the absence of organizable oppositions in American politics has meant that the Democratic party is a remarkably protean beast. Its leaders can and do have freedom to wander widely over the policy landscape. Jimmy Carter is not only the latest example, but one of the purest. He can and will, so far as possible, preempt issues that his primary opponents and the Republicans might use in their efforts to unseat him. So will many in the congressional Democratic party. So what, fundamentally, will change in and around the electoral arena?

Not very much will change, unless or until the survival needs of the dominant mode of production require it. But the foregoing analysis raises the lively prospect that we may at last be reaching such a condition. In the short term, the Republican candidate of 1980 may or may not succeed by tapping public reactions to high inflation and the Administration's ineptitude abroad. But it is hard to imagine how runaway increases in the social-security levy, rapid and heavy increases in defense spending, high inflation, possibly substantial increases in unemployment, and persistent declines in the mass standard of living can be sustained indefinitely without producing a political explosion.

A rediscovery of the economic market's virtues comes to seem, under these conditions, both appropriate and nearly inevitable. So do arguments and policies favoring capital accumulation over consumption and a conversion of as much as possible of the domestic public sector's activity to a pay-as-you-go

(and pay-as-and-if-you-can-afford-it) basis. For in the absence of an organizable socialist critique of political capitalism, the operational code of American politics can only fluctuate between neo-laissez-faire and the "entitlement"-oriented welfare state. Both the capital-accumulation needs of the regime at the top and the personal survival needs of a dominantly middle-class voting population now point toward disentanglement as the order of the day. If so, then the initiative in political discourse and action will continue to move toward the neo-laissez-faire pole. There is an obvious implication in all this: the American Lockean-liberal tradition, as capable in the past of unexpected revitalizations as the capitalism it supports, may at last have run out of historically creative options.

But dismantling the welfare state—even placing it at zero real growth for any length of time—would involve speeding up the impoverishment of the poor and even of significant parts of the middle classes. If the Republicans today enjoy the identified support of little more than one-fifth of the electorate, there are very good reasons for this. Given their incapacity to develop a credible political formula appropriate to an age of retrenchment, their success in curbing the entitlement state would inevitably, sooner rather than later, produce an electoral reaction in favor of the Democrats. Large-scale sacrifices from the American people are already being called for and are almost certainly on the way. They will require legitimation. If a model of the state's "proper" role based on the conditions of 1936 no longer seems adequate to the difficulties we now face, the 1886 variety seems even less suitable so long as a relatively free electoral market continues to exist.

This sort of dead end at least suggests that some sort of socialist (or at least laborite) alternative vision of our human potential might possibly be seriously organized. Perhaps so; but, while the future ought not to be foreclosed, such an eventuality seems remote. Uncontested hegemony is not easily overthrown. Among other things, the organization of world politics since the

Bolshevik Revolution has served to displace the struggle between such alternatives onto the international arena.

Insupportable ideological demands are placed on Americans *as a whole*, along with threatening *Realpolitik* demands, by the so-called Socialist bloc. Equally insupportable material demands are being made on Americans *as a whole* by the Third World "southern" nations in the ongoing north-south dialogue, and especially by the OPEC cartel. Domestically, such external pressures notoriously tend to weld a "coalition of the whole." They narrow seriously organizable alternatives in domestic politics—very much as, in 1896, the Democrats with their free-silver campaign united and rallied against themselves overwhelming majorities of voters in the industrial Northeast. In such situations of threat, people who regard themselves and are regarded by others as "haves" (no matter how illusory the perception may be) will unite on this issue, while they divide on everything else. We may be left for the foreseeable future with an ongoing, increasingly sterile debate between laissez-faire conservatives and "statist" liberals.

In the last analysis, what we have been describing is a chronic but now escalating crisis of rule—a crisis, therefore, in the foundations of the constitutional regime that now exists in the United States. Such a crisis is not likely to be resolved within the framework of that regime, nor, *a fortiori*, within the traditional Republican/Democratic choice structure. The vacuum of power and policy created along the way is patently dangerous to the long-term survival of the American state and of capitalism itself. The problem of *authoritatively* defining a collective national purpose becomes as intractable as it is necessary.

This point is now clearly understood by those intellectual conservatives who go virtually as far as they dare in their proposals to curb what John Adams, in simpler times, once called "the democratical element."¹⁰ For the decay of the American empire's economic and international foundations returns us squarely to the dilemma so visible in the 1930s

and forgotten during the postwar boom. There is inevitable conflict between accumulation and legitimation strategies, visible precisely to the extent that surplus does not grow. There is, therefore, an even deeper conflict, when ultimate push comes to ultimate shove, between capitalism and democracy—made deeper, if possible, by the feudalized governmental machinery through which democratic impulses are processed in the United States. It has been the first principle of the “liberal tradition in America” to deny the existence of any such conflict. But it has now become irrepressible. It is a mark of the times that only those on the right seem to have become aware that this is so, and to draw the appropriate conclusions (for them) as to the future ordering of politics.

Antonio Gramsci once observed that “the crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old

is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms occurs.”¹¹ If you seek a monument to the truth of this statement, look around you. Such a blocked context would seem to require of people who do not owe allegiance to the “conservative revival” that they pay more rather than less attention to what is going on in the 1980 election and its successors. They also have more reason to concentrate their attention on the course of the “conservative revival” in both the ideological and operational spheres, and to shape their own actions accordingly. The task, one would suppose, is to find a way out that liberates rather than destroy man’s capacity for self-realization not only as an individual but as a social being. There will be work enough for anyone who feels the call to undertake it. □

Notes

¹Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1969).

²Donald E. Stokes, “Spatial Models of Party Competition,” in Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, *Elections and the Political Order* (New York: Wiley, 1966), pp. 170-74.

³*Tribune (Whig) Almanac for 1856* (New York, 1855), p. 7.

⁴Lloyd Free and Hadley Cantril, *The Political Beliefs of Americans* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1967).

⁵See the analysis of the 1981 budget in the *New York Times*, January 20, 1980, Sec. 3, pp. 1 and 14.

⁶These estimates are taken from the recent account of the problem of declining real income in *Business Week*, January 28, 1980, pp. 72-78.

⁷For a full discussion, see Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976). Bell’s argument is close to, and partially follows, that presented a generation earlier by Joseph Schumpeter in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1942, 1947, 1950).

⁸Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., “Political Parties and

Macroeconomic Policy,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 71, pp. 1467-87 (1977). For a provocative account of these and related issues, see also Edward R. Tufte, *Political Control of the Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

⁹For a fuller discussion of this problem see my essay “The Appearance and Disappearance of the American Voter,” in Richard Rose, ed., *Political Participation* (London: Sage, 1980, forthcoming).

¹⁰Most notably, so far, in Samuel P. Huntington’s essay, “The Democratic Distemper,” in Nathan Glazer and Irving Kristol, eds., *The American Commonwealth 1976* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), pp. 9-38. Kristol has made an interesting effort to evade the point in his essay “The Worst Is Yet to Come,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 26, 1979. Kristol attempts this by restating the classic Cold War synthesis: democracy based on an ever-expanding economic pie, capitalism, and a militarized response to external challenge. It is one thesis of my present essay that the historic conditions for the success of that synthesis have expired.

¹¹Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 276. □

10/89

Bernard Rosenberg

The Arabs of Israel

As the mass media focus our attention on international relations in the Middle East, we are too often distracted from equally explosive internal affairs. Time bombs tick away and jolt us only when they erupt. (Perhaps an early warning system of sympathetic criticism is in order.) The condition of Israel's Arabs, those within the Green Line, or pre-1967 borders, provides a particularly serious case in point.

Who are these Arabs, these "full citizens of a democratic and pluralistic state"? They are descendants or survivors of an Arab minority that somehow remained in 1948 when a majority of their brethren fled the new nation of Israel. Those who stayed on numbered about 125,000. Now, merely by natural growth, they are over half a million strong, constituting 15 or 16 percent of the total population. Already proportionally a bigger ethnic group in Israel than blacks in the United States, their continued increase is taken for granted. Demographers who study the large families and growing life expectancy of these people project a figure of 1 million Arabs in the Jewish homeland by 1990. Golda Meir is said to have exclaimed that for some time she lost sleep every night thinking about the birth of another Arab child in Israel. And David Ben Gurion, at least in his official capacity, never visited an Israeli Arab village. His attitude, benevolent enough in its way (Zionist leaders have always pointed with justification to the greater economic well-being of Arabs inside than outside Israel), was still compounded of distance and delay. "Let there be peace and the problem will solve itself."

There is partial peace and the problem

seems to be worse than ever. Nor will the pressure of sheer numbers soon cease. These Arabs are not about to leave. "They're here to stay" is a unanimous judgment expressed all over Israel. Many Jews, mostly WASPS (White - Ashkenazi - Sabras-with-Proteczia), have resettled in other parts of the world. These *yordim* by their probably permanent departure are draining the Israeli population; it has so far lost 10 percent of its Jewish citizens to New York, Los Angeles, and the glittering Diaspora at large.

But Arabs continue to live in a state from which they feel increasingly alienated. Why? Well, what are the alternatives? Who for more than 30 years in all of Islam has really wanted them? Are they simply odious to other Arabs? At first they were widely held to be traitors or collaborators, subverting the grand Arab design by their cooperation with an "illegitimate," i.e., a Jewish state. Some who tried to cross the border were sent back. Today "rejectionist" Arabs expect them to tarry in Israel as the spearhead of a great force that will finally be organized to disestablish that state.

Once viewed as a possible bridge to peace, they are now generally regarded as an obstacle even to rapprochement. Israel's Arabs, unwelcome in nations more fully inhabited by their fellows, are in any case attached to the territory they have long occupied. In Palestine, under the British, they belonged to a majority whose flight included many of their most affluent members, among them clergymen, teachers, and intellectuals. Relatively leaderless, they were nevertheless touched in an inchoate way by the decolonization of old Arabia and its attendant struggles

for power. Pan Arabism with an undercurrent of state nationalism reached them but did not greatly affect their conduct.

They studied Hebrew with some success, sent several representatives to the Knesset, and gradually adapted to or passively accepted a society that seven Arab nations had sought to throttle at birth. The cry of second-class citizenship could be heard but it was scarcely more audible among Arab Israelis than among Sephardim, the so-called Oriental Jews (coming from Arab countries), currently awakening to *their* subordination.

JACK COHEN, a dedicated Reconstructionist rabbi and Hillel director, has devoted 18 years to the task of reconciling Jews and Arabs. He actively participates in the Rainbow Club for theologians of every persuasion; its members meet regularly but have yet to attract their first Muslim. Cohen's major function is to work at the Hebrew University with Arab students for whom he also tries to raise funds. Cohen remembers being introduced some years ago to a wealthy Lebanese-American from whom he solicited financial support for those students—only to be told that “Our community is not interested in helping *Israelis*.” For they were so identified and so identified themselves, with whatever misgivings, until June of 1967. Seldom can a historical transition be so precisely pinpointed. About this one, however, there is little doubt. And heightened Arab consciousness, a major consequence of the Six-Day War, was merely the prelude to a deeper subjective transformation that followed the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

Until 1967 Jack Cohen never heard the word Palestinian from an Arab student. Neither did anyone else. By the late '70s one heard nothing else. Indeed, “Israeli Arab” is no longer an acceptable term within the academic subculture that overwhelmingly defines itself as Palestinian. (Arabs comprise 2 or 3 percent of the total student population.) Concerning the broader subculture, Sami Smouha, that *rara avis*, a Sephardic professor who heads the Arab department at

Haifa University, has collected solid data in a recent survey sponsored by the Ford Foundation. Smouha reports, as of June 1979, that: 50 percent of Israel's Arab population rejects the state's right to exist; 64 percent consider the Zionist movement to be racist; 87 percent favor an immediate return to the pre-1967 borders; and 64 percent back abolition of the Law of Return (which permits any Jew to achieve instant Israeli citizenship). In the light of such findings, it is easier to understand why a small group of Hebrew University Arab students should have called a press conference not long ago expressly to endorse the PLO program and its tactics. They appear to be speaking for more of their companions than was hitherto suspected.

When Arab met Arab in the West Bank in 1967, following its occupation by Israel, or in Jerusalem, a single city after two decades of division, coreligionists—not infrequently relatives—were reunited. This association fostered a special consciousness of kind. With face-to-face contact, Israel's Arabs developed a new perspective on their lives. It was borne in upon them that they had kinsmen not so far away who ran their own government and others who would in all likelihood soon run theirs. Simultaneously they experienced an “identity crisis” and its resolution. Henceforth they too were to be Palestinians.

And that, if it were not so problematic, would be that. For what is a Palestinian? Does this designation presuppose a state? Or is it a vaguer manifestation of nationalism grown out of a sense of mistreatment both by other Arabs and by Jews? Objectively, Palestinians have come to be Arabs: (1) in conquered areas; (2) in Arab states where many of them swell refugee camps or work in oil fields, and (3) most paradoxically, in Israel as citizens. Among these categories there is a frequently nebulous, sometimes clear, but never one-sided connection. The political game is anything but solitaire. Even if we see that game as a grim contest between Arabs and Jews, then, as Jack Cohen put it to me, “Each side is in an untenable position: Palestinians in the Arab world and Jews in the whole damn world.”

Binationals no longer exist in Israel. The disintegration of Lebanon, which ostensibly provided a model of Christian-Muslim amity, dealt a death blow to their splendid idea. But Martin Buber and Judah Magnes still look like moral heroes if only because of their sensitivity to the Arabs in whose midst they encouraged oppressed Jews to settle. Buber spoke everlastingly in the interest of constructive plans for colonization, education, and industrialization that would take Jews and Arabs into account. Ernst Simon, an eighty-year-old scholar (and so much the activist that he apologized for chatting with me instead of attending a Peace Now demonstration), carries on in the spirit of Buber. In his eyes, the Six-Day War, or rather its aftermath, need not have polarized and radicalized Israel's Arabs as in fact it did. Simon believes that 1967 presented a maximum opportunity. He said so at the time in a broadside bearing the title "Wanted: A Positive Shock Therapy." Simon pictures the situation as follows:

Had the Arabs won they would have made a massacre. We won and not only did not murder anybody but felt guilty about the Arabs our army killed in battle. This produced astonishment. It was also the moment to administer positive shock therapy—more and more humane treatment.

The moment passed and about this Simon reflects, "Without victory we would have been dead. With victory we were fools." And he elevates the moral failure into an existential proposition, "People *may* learn from their defeats but never from their victories."

All along, the Israeli government did some good for its Arab citizens. As their standard of living went up, unemployment disappeared. Other isolated or uncoordinated, mainly economic improvements did take place—and some of these *exacerbated* the trouble. To illustrate this point, Simon draws upon European history. In 18th-century France, while extremely poor proletarians fought for the king, comparatively affluent petty-bourgeois peasants joined the revolution. And from this too he adduces a generalization

that is amply documented, say, in Crane Brinton's *The Anatomy of Revolution*. Much careful research from Tocqueville to the present suggests that economic progress without enhancement of political rights tends to make for revolution. It is with such ideas that Simon, three weeks after the 1967 war, went to two key Labor party officials, both men of compassion and reason. One said that it was already too late. (He may regain power and recover a measure of hope. So it is best to leave him anonymous.) The other, Levi Eshkol, "momentarily forgetting that he was the Prime Minister," sighed and said, "Our old good Zionism is gone."

From then to now, thoughtful leaders—maybe even a few in the Likud—have had a bad conscience about "their Arabs." Over what? Where concretely has the Israeli establishment failed? For a preliminary assessment, one consults Dr. Sami Geraisi, a learned and moderate Christian Arab, employed in Nazareth by the Department of Labor and Welfare as director of Probation Services for Arab youth. While encyclopedic on the situation as a whole, he is least anxious at this moment about the area of his own official concern. Arab delinquency is on the increase but remains inconsequential by comparison with that of technologically more advanced countries. Modernization brings its usual plus and minus factors. On the plus side, girls are freer to choose their own mates and this, with less poverty, helps to reduce prostitution. But fathers in the traditional society of Arab village life are still the providers. By immemorial custom wives and children help on farms and in homes. Whereas 36 percent of all Jewish women are in the labor force and most of them high in its echelons, only 10 percent of Arab women work away from home, doing menial and difficult tasks, mostly picking produce on nearby moshavim and kibbutzim. They, along with imported Arab labor that daily crosses and recrosses the Green Line, comprise the cheap labor supply for collectives whose Jewish founders used to make a religion of manual labor.

Perhaps Geraisi exaggerates, but he sees

these collectives as huge exploitative enterprises, representing the largest concentration of capital in the country. Geraisi claims that investment in kibbutzim is much higher than in cities and towns with proportionately less money, water, and machinery. Hence,

If you take a kibbutz of 500 people and a village of 10,000 Arabs, the kibbutz may have 5,000 dunams of irrigated land with up-to-date tractors and combines alongside factories for the mechanical production of cotton goods, tinning, canning, and so forth. By contrast, the village may have from two to five dunams of inadequately irrigated land, far less capital, and no industry.

So the Arab village, like the West Bank, has become a reservoir of cheap labor. The “old good Zionism” is deeply compromised when its donkey work devolves on Arabs and Oriental Jews (even if each group also has its *nouveaux riches*). Israeli Arab women work, when they do, in Jewish agriculture and to a lesser degree in light industry. Their men are concentrated in the building trades, where they may prosper, or in low-level service occupations, as waiters and cleaners, but hardly at all in industry, which is preponderantly military and therefore related to national security, where the Arab is suspect.

You might say, as some apologists do, that the government has provided health and child care as well as work in exchange for the loss of land that Arabs have suffered. But it is the loss that incenses them whereas the benefits have served to raise expectations beyond any realistic chance of fulfillment. Arab leaders maintain (and Smouha confirms) that since 1948 about 60 percent of their land has been taken from them by confiscation, expropriation with minimal compensation, or “seizure,” the word Menahem Begin for obscure lawyerly reasons prefers, even though in English, and no doubt in Hebrew, it sounds worse. On this matter, however, the Arab *bête noire* is not so much Begin as his Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon. For it is Sharon who proclaims and implements “Judaization” of

the Galilee and the Negev, just those areas most heavily populated by Arabs. No other policy or practice, with its implication that Jews “truly” love the land and Arabs do not, has provoked as much resentment as this one.

If Israeli Arab grievances turn largely on land, life chances, and discriminatory treatment related to growth and development in all spheres, then it is surely land that looms largest. There can be little question that land has taken on incalculable symbolic significance. No less a figure than King Hussein has declared, “I can understand that Sadat would forgo the rights of people, but how could he forgo the rights of land?” Obviously the question would occur only to someone for whom the alienation of land is an unspeakable crime. Eugene Weiner, a very able Israeli sociologist, doubts that any Westerner steeped in modernity can ever grasp a world view that places land above people. But there we have it—wound in a convoluted historical matrix of symbols and attitudes.

From a practical standpoint the problem of housing—indeed a major, and grossly unequal, matter for most Israelis—derives directly from the shrinkage of Arab land. Arabs get fewer housing grants or loans, only 1 percent of the government housing budget and, naturally, nothing at all from the Jewish Agency, which has a four-year, billion-dollar building program in the works. Cramped for space, Arabs have taken to building vertically instead of horizontally: different segments of the same clan are beginning to occupy additional floors instead of adjacent structures.

There is another side to this issue. So sympathetic an observer as Weiner maintains that Arabs get much more for their taxes than Jews, that they are even more skillful at tax evasion, and that the state indirectly subsidizes their housing. Maybe. But the argument is lame. And no case at all can be made for refusing to permit the return of Arabs to villages from which they were forcibly removed decades ago. In the spring of 1979 this dispatch, datelined Safad, appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*:

Residents of the Arab village of Akra, near here, appealed to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on Friday to help them return to the village from which they were evacuated in 1948 for security reasons.

This is the first time since the establishment of the state that Israeli Arabs have appealed to any Arab ruler to intervene in their dispute with Israeli authorities. Thirty-eight families on Friday signed a petition which was sent to Prime Minister Menahem Begin, U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and Sadat. In their petition, they wrote that "the time has come to return us to our home village of Kaddita, which is still vacant and waiting." Some weeks ago the villagers asked authorities to build a new village for them or to return them to their former village. The authorities suggested they settle in other villages in the Galilee and offered to supply them with loans and land.

The municipality of Nazareth, where Jews and Arabs coexist without overt friction, decided to support these demands. Meanwhile, the authorities contend that to yield would be to set a bad precedent. One supposes, on the contrary, that a bad precedent now has been set and should be upset before time runs out on men who if they endlessly equivocate will cease to be "the authorities."

Let us grant that a new military airport must be built in the Negev. Must it also uproot as many as 10,000 Bedouins? These traditional sheep-and-cattle herders have, like Gypsies in Europe, to some extent settled down in towns and villages. The lands they traversed as nomads may be taken from them on juridical grounds foreign to their premodern way of thinking. Bedouins move about or sit on territory in the Negev for which they have no written documents that certify formal ownership. Long possession is intelligible to them; bureaucratic categories are not. About this Ernst Simon remarks, "We must learn *their* way of thinking. It will take a lot less time than having them learn ours." Very well. What happens when communication has been effected? Then, in Simon's opinion, the Israeli public must make sure it's an airport that really needs building and that the land will not be used instead to

raise more onions and tomatoes. After that, officials should arrange adequate compensation, sufficient and comparable room, and enough money for resettlement. The criteria of adequacy and sufficiency ought to be negotiable.

And with all that, full equity will still not have been achieved. Israel may strive to assure a possible degree of justice within the limits of "military security"—which may be unattainable in any case—and, finally, in Simon's prescription, have the goodness to be conscience-stricken about all that remains undone. Practice magnanimity in the Arab-Jewish interest. For without it, specifically in the case of deracinated Bedouins, "They will go to the nearest Jewish city and become proletarians without skills, in other words, a propertyless urban lumpenproletariat." This process raises the specter of displaced persons rotting in their own country. For, although most Israeli Arabs go up in the world, some experience downward mobility leading to such spiritual and material deterioration that they *are* at last a danger. That danger grows in proportion as detribalized Arabs come to resemble "lonely Africans" and other lost souls of the Third World. Modernization produces typical discontents and little else—unless its fruits are equitably distributed. Only a limited number of more or less powerless Israeli Jews, and a smaller number with power, are committed to that end.

BERNARD OCH, Jack Cohen's protégé and opposite number in Haifa, is just such a dedicated Jew. One of his functions is to work with approximately 600 Arab students at the University of Haifa (10 or 12 years ago there were no more than 40). The university also boasts several Arab professors. Not one can be found in any of the other six Israeli universities where, however, there are lowlier Arab academics. It is evidently accurate to say of all such Arab faculty that they are ultracautious, outwardly apolitical, and necessarily dependent on Jewish colleagues whose good will they need for professorial advancement. Their safest course is to shut up.

It is altogether otherwise with Arab students who are as outspoken in their identification with the Palestinian cause as they were totally isolated from it until 1967. They do less well academically than Jewish students. Och and others point to the difficulty these young Arabs have in dealing with abstract ideas (where have we heard that before?); their poor English, a language that is essential in Israeli higher, and supposedly lower, education; most come from an intellectually impoverished background where parents rarely talk to their children, etc. The familiar story. With some unfamiliar touches. For instance, the average Arab student is years younger than his Jewish counterpart. Except for the Druzes, a separate sect whose holy men recognized the State of Israel at its inception, Israeli Arabs are not conscripted into the armed forces. That leaves most Arab students free to enter the university directly after high school. It also allows for one year's remediation in the form of preparatory studies that do not help enough to put young Arabs on par with more mature Jewish students.

Both contingents are strongly motivated to succeed in academia but for opposite reasons. The Jewish student wants to get ahead in a society with which he already identifies whereas the Arab youngster with national aspirations wants to be a better Palestinian. So pronounced is this tendency that one hears talk in Israel about founding a separate Arab university. Concerning that proposal an American like myself must be as ambivalent as he is about "Negro" colleges. The ethnically homogeneous institution can be upgraded but it also reinforces obnoxious patterns of segregation. And the United States, where black nationalism has gone into eclipse, is not surrounded by Africans as Israel is by Arabs.

Although some Arab students, but always fewer and fewer, may camouflage their involvement, practically all of them plunge into the vortex of regional, national, and local politics. "After all," says Och, "a campus is one of the few places where Arabs can function politically." To Och, with his American antecedents, it appears that Arab,

student politics is a delayed expression of '60s-style radicalism. And yet he admits, somewhat inconsistently, that there is no breach between Arab students and their elders, few of whom act or think like New Leftists.

The Arab electorate, while now split this way and that, is steadily more committed, at least in parliamentary contests, to one party, which is Rakah, the Communist party of Israel. Rakah, in line with Soviet policy, formally accepts the existence of Israel while strongly promoting a separate Palestinian state. Young Arabs tend to be on the left wing of Rakah as many older Arabs are likely to be on the right—both factions conforming to an old principle of politics, namely, that the smaller a party the larger its wings. To the left of Rakah are followers of Arafat and the even more immoderate Dr. Habash. On its right are those who adhere to Arab affiliates of the established parties, people who are stigmatized as opportunists even if the preferment they seek is for Israeli Arabs in general. At no point on this spectrum do we find any actual terrorists.

The old parties, including the Old Communist Maki, were founded by European Jewish immigrants. Until recently they also encompassed Arabs and Oriental Jews who arrived after 1948. As Moshe Shokeid, an anthropologist immersed in the analysis of Israeli electoral trends and campaign strategies, has written: "Middle Eastern Jewish immigrants and Arabs were impelled into a political order designed by the veteran Jewish population." On the whole, Oriental Jews have been well integrated into preexisting parties—with a strong tilt toward the Likud bloc. No major party has conferred "full membership," that is, an integrated list, upon Arab voters. The old parties did and do nevertheless attempt to attract the Arab electorate. Their mechanism for this purpose is "the Arab list," a separate set of candidates attached to each of the ballots. Rakah has eaten away at the establishment's lists. Despite the agit-prop of professional

ideologues, no one supposes that Rakah's growth has much to do with Communism of any stripe. It has almost everything to do with protest.

A. Cohen, another anthropologist cited by Shokeid, discerned a slight shift away from traditional party lists as early as 1959 when Maki was the chief beneficiary. But even then the basic relationship between Arab candidates and prevailing parties was mutually opportunistic. A trade-off: votes for specific advantages. Or as Cohen indicates:

The majority of electors seemed to be interested in immediate material gain rather than in the success of any particular ideology. Individuals, groups and sometimes whole villages bartered votes for material rewards of various sorts, like a piped water supply, electricity, public buildings.

By 1969, the protest escalated dramatically. For that year Israel's Bureau of Statistics found among its most significant data that all Israeli (Zionist) Labor parties had lost Arab voters to the Arab New Communist Rakah. What had happened? Theories abound, among them that Arab youth were coming into their own (how could it be otherwise when the average age of Israeli Arabs is fifteen and a half), that a higher standard of living diminished their dependence on the Jewish establishment; that conventional Arab candidates were "mediocre at best," devoid of ideology and given over to the method of favor dispensation, with such Jewish leaders as Golda Meir, Abba Eban, and Yigal Allon speaking on their behalf; that while Rakah politicians had no favors to dispense, they were "eloquent and talented," dealing with matters of overall policy and principle especially appealing to the Arab young who were drifting away from their parents. Even so, it is assumed in some quarters that Rakah's 1969 election returns could have been higher. Some Arabs were intimidated that year by Deputy Prime Minister Allon, a normally conciliatory man, "who, campaigning for the Labor party, plainly warned his Arab audiences that if they voted for

Rakah, their future requests would go unheeded" (Shokeid).

Possibly this low blow was part of the infighting that brought Labor down a few years later. But Allon's outbursts are gentle compared with a statement made early in 1979 by the protean Moshe Dayan, formerly a Labor leader and then a Likud minister. As quoted in the *New York Times*, Dayan threatened Israeli Arabs that if they did not "behave," they would find themselves in the same position "as their brothers of 1948"—across the border. Was Dayan even transiently converted to the school of Meir Kahane whose thugs have taken to uprooting olive vines and violently entering Arab homes in and around "occupied" or "administered" Nablus? (Probably not. He was referring to nonexistent terrorists.) Kahane is giving fanaticism a bad name. Spokesmen for Gush Emunim, wild enough in their own annexationism, keep asking American visitors: "Why do you send us these animals (the Kahaneites)?" Who in this tangle of irrational forces is "misbehaving"? Not the Israeli Arabs; in 31 years they have yet to fire their first shot at an Israeli policeman. If Dayan had meant that free exercise of the franchise by Arabs in a manner uncongenial to him could result in their expulsion, he would indeed have taken a big step toward the sociopathic view of Meir Kahane. This Brooklyn-born demagogue has a final solution to the Israeli Arab problem: expulsion.

In any case, Rakah keeps growing at the polls, from 28.5 percent of the Arab vote in 1969 and 40.3 in 1973 to 50 percent in 1977. It is hard to take an optimistic view of this trend, but Moshe Shokeid manages:

I suggest that a single political system for both Arabs and Jews is replacing the previous dual political system in which different rules of behavior applied for each group. The integration of the Arab and Jewish electorates into one political system does not imply the emergence of consensual order. It does imply, however, the emergence of a universal order in which Arabs and Jews would approach the center of power, and would be approached by those aspiring to

reach it, by the same norms and frameworks of political behavior.

Although Shokeid may be right, hardly anyone agrees with him. Many complex variables will have to work in a positive direction to produce the happy outcome he envisages. At best it would be a question of the long haul. Arab disaffection from the major parties, above all Labor, could conceivably produce a metamorphosis (some day).

Pending a wholesale political change for the better, amicable if short-lived association goes on here and there. Mostly, but not invariably, it leads to Heartbreak House. Despite dark premonitions, the everyday reality of Arab-Jewish life is quiet and civilized. Weiner is struck, for instance, by the polite academic interchange between Jewish war widows and Arab students. Although crazies of the left and the right leave him equally apprehensive, only a right-wing Jewish hothead ever threatened his life. To date, the Israeli Arab dementia is different. On Holocaust Day, Weiner addressed 30 Arab students at the University of Haifa. He encountered "a perceptual block to recognizing the historical truth." Which is to say, the majority of these students felt that all talk of the Holocaust was Jewish propaganda. He summarizes their reasoning as follows: the Holocaust should not have happened since it now serves Jewish purposes; therefore, it actually didn't happen—nor did anything else that interferes with the "legitimate rights of Palestinian nationalism." "Okay," said Weiner, "Let's recognize those rights but let's also recognize that Hitler slaughtered millions of Jews." No deal. Nazism is history, and history is "out" these days. But the incomprehension is more profound than that. In despair over his "surreal" experience, Weiner wonders whether people who cannot share the pathos of each others' positions will be able to find any basis for rational discourse.

Consider Och's dilemma on the same campus. Here's a man who cherishes person-to-person contact wherever it occurs: "That is our island of sanity." Uncommon or not, it

does affect Arab and Jewish students. Being thrust together in classrooms or brought together by peace-makers results in a greater all-around ability to cooperate. With extreme effort Och himself can lift 50 or 60 ethnically mixed students to a certain level of sympathy and understanding. "And then Kahane comes to the campus or a PLO bomb explodes hereabouts," and the delicate fabric of interaction is blown to hell.

Listen to the naturally sanguine educator Kalman Yaron, who directs the Hebrew University's Martin Buber Institute for Adult Education where some 400 students assemble, Jews to learn Arabic, Arabs to learn Hebrew. Yaron, a devotee of what some Zionists once derisively labeled the Buberiosis, is a true believer in the "I-Thou" relationship, but he realizes that it takes contact on an equal footing to engender empathy, rapport, sensitivity, or whatever else you choose to call the x-factor in human interaction. Yehoshua Armi, a social psychologist, has applied findings from his field to various kinds of present and prospective Arab-Jewish contact. Preconceptions, unsurprisingly, make a great difference. Armi emphasizes the human "strain for consistency," which will work to fortify any attitude. It makes strong antagonism stronger and weak antagonism weaker. Armi's best prognosis is for jointly beneficial enterprises that enjoy institutional support. It follows that contact will be most deleterious wherever the participants stress status in a threatening or rigid political context—the perfect formula for an intensification of hostility.

I oversimplify, but with all such conclusions, plus their subtler convolutions and variations, Yaron would certainly concur. Furthermore, in his classes with their fifty-fifty mix of Jews and Arabs mutually committed to eliminating the language barrier that separates them, optimal conditions for the furtherance of understanding do exist. Yaron accepts Buber's basic assumption, that "every real life is an encounter." In his Institute he sees people from both sides developing "friendships and quite close relations." This kind of contact on a tiny scale

of course produces that measure of trust without which not even little bridges can be built. And these bridges would collapse under the weight of certain proclivities that, since they cannot be hidden, should be exorcised. Thus neither in a small group nor in the larger society nor on the international scene is it permissible for Jews to be patronizing to Arabs. To do so, from Yaron's angle of vision, is to invite the same fate that American liberals experienced when blacks ordered them to "get off their backs." Ordinary daily contact, without condescension, can work little wonders. At the very least it can teach Arabs that not all Jews are monsters (or supermen) and teach Jews that not all Arabs are bomb-throwers.

But what if some Jews do act badly and if some Arabs come in to throw bombs? In that case the abstraction, the negative stereotype and the hate will persist. Only So-and-So is then the exception. Yaron is one, and he believes that in both camps there are plenty of other "exceptions." Once, when hospitalized, he had Arab friends visit him at his bedside. I-and-Thou. In certain circumstances it adds up, but only to a hill of beans without deep-going social, economic, and political change. Preclude that change as an essential ingredient of any peace package, and even for a benevolent man like Yaron, apartheid is a genuine possibility that will become a certainty if right-wingers have their way and Israel gains long-time control over a million more Arabs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The ensuing calamity would destroy Israeli society from within. And Yaron concedes that, as things stand, binationalism would only be a more benign form of apartheid, tranquilized at best by Coca-Cola culture. Yaron insists that if Buber were alive today, he too would repudiate binationalism as unrealizable or undesirable—and would also hold that some kind of Palestinian state is absolutely necessary: "Martin Buber was not a naive man. He knew we were not living in heaven."

I would say the same for Jack Cohen, another wide-awake idealist who acts on the principle Yaron enunciates: "If you can't do,

good, at least refrain from doing evil." In his circumscribed realm Cohen does a great deal of good. Yet when he felt used by extremist Arab students going through Maoist and PLOist phases, Cohen lost patience with them and withdrew his cooperation from their Committee for two or three years. Moreover, if this altruistic Jew can admit, "Every time a terrorist bomb goes off my conscience gets a little weaker," what dare we expect of lesser mortals?

The basic fact to Cohen and anyone else with a scintilla of historical sense is this: within Israel from the day of its inception there have been *two* peoples who not only want but feel that they need the same thing. In 1947 the United Nations granted one of them a state that was explicitly designed as *the* sanctuary for what remained of a decimated and homeless people. Superpowers acted decisively after World War II to fulfill a promise set forth in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that guaranteed a perennially persecuted people its own Jewish homeland. A democratic Israel, sliced out of British Mandatory Palestine, came into being.* That state, however, was formally identified not with all its citizens but rather more narrowly with a majority of them.

Study Israel's Arabs. Talk to them or their champions. You will behold an aggrieved minority, one that is unhappy for all the reasons with which I have barely dealt here, and so many more that it would take a book to explain them. Let me just touch upon something else, namely, the embitterment of Arabs who complain that they have been symbolically obliterated from a state that is both *de facto* and *de jure* pluralistic (at the same time that it is exclusivistic). Jews, but not Jews alone, have a right to be proud of *Eretz Yisrael*. They make full use of that right. It resounds through *Hatikvah*, their anthem,

*In 1922 Britain partitioned Mandatory Palestine, with Transjordan parceled out as Arab territory. In 1947 the mandatory area west of the Jordan River was partitioned. Two states were to be created, one for Arabs and one for Jews, but Jordan annexed the West Bank while the attenuated State of Israel came into being.

as it is woven into their flag. Israeli Jews signalize their arrival after 2,000 years of exile as “a nation among the nations” on every bit of currency, on every postage stamp they issue. Street names are Jewish. In fact, the Israeli forest of symbols is entirely Jewish. Is this a trifling matter? No doubt, in the great scheme of things it is. But are officials unable to do anything about so understandable a source of Arab outrage? Why can’t Israel ceremonially celebrate an Arab hero? Where is it written that no Arab judge should sit on the secular Supreme Court? Let one be appointed. Gestures and tokens would not carry us very far. They might, however, point toward a national purpose that, in transcending mere ethnicity, could keep Israel from unthinkable alternatives.

The truth is this: the world’s classic minority must learn how to be a responsible majority in one place. There can be no more difficult place than the Middle East in which to master such a role. About the sliver of the Levant that is Israel, one formulation is the most depressing: “To the Jews, the Arab presence is a historical accident; to the Arabs the Jewish presence is a historical accident.” The words are those of Moshe Sharon, formerly Menahem Begin’s adviser on Arab affairs. Upon resigning his post, Sharon submitted to an interview published in the Israeli daily *Maariv*. There he criticized the Begin regime for promoting “a vast gap” between Israeli Jews and Arabs. Sharon flailed the government for its failure to provide adequate educational facilities in Arab population centers, which are reportedly short more than 2,000 classrooms. Moshe Sharon, otherwise well-known for his hawkishness, spoke of “young Arab intellectuals who are law-abiding citizens [but] feel frustrated, discriminated against and alienated.” He emphasized the *necessity* of industrializing Israeli Arab villages whose people travel daily to Jewish towns and settlements to work in Jewish establishments for Jewish bosses.

So much thunder on the right predictably

evoked applause on the left. Sharon was praised for his courageous criticism; alas it evaporated by June 1979. Addressing an international conference on Peace in the Middle East at Tel Aviv University, he rejected integration as impossible on account of cultural differences and, even-handedly, cast aside the idea of segregation, “which could lead to Arab irredentism.” What then? Why, “asymmetrical symbiosis” or an indefinitely prolonged Israeli dominance of Jews over Arabs. If Moshe Sharon had not articulated a widely held but mostly unspoken notion it would not be worth mentioning. Under the circumstances, one must counter the notion. In short, and in Poli-Sci jargon, only “symmetrical symbiosis” is worth pursuing. Anything less than that in the volatile, insecure, and unstable situation that Israel confronts would pose a deadly danger to Jewish ethics and to liberal democracy.

Doctrinaire Marxists used to argue that, short of socialism, nothing much could be done for the black minority in this country. Much has been done and much more remains to be done before the millennium—which will arrive anyhow, like Kafka’s Messiah, “on the day after the day after.” Neither White America nor Jewish Israel has any reason for complacency, but on the record others are failing miserably even when nationality is religiously defined as in Northern Ireland. The problem is more acute in several Arab lands where Kurds and Shi’ites and Sunnites and Coptic Christians and Greek Orthodox religionists have at one another with far more savagery than the differentiated peoples of Israel. What of the Chinese in Malaysia or those ruthlessly deported from Vietnam, who, any Israeli Jew will tell you, are generically no different from the million Jews forced out of Arab countries after 1948? What of black Africans in the Southern Sudan? Algerians in France? Or all the aggrieved nationalities who will soon outnumber the Great Russian majority in a country where the grisliest domination still holds sway? We are in the presence of a global problem that will not wait on any eschatological solution. Not only in the name of decency but to save our skins, we

must address ourselves bit by bit to this issue. Despite a hundred impediments, the odds in Israel are not as poor as in other places. Modern miracles do happen in the Holy Land. Else why would Sadat have taken his unforeseeable initiative?

It is necessary now to plan for the peace that may break out, which will surely expose domestic troubles and internal fissures that boil and fester even as they are more than half-hidden from the world; to fight for civil and political equality; to reduce xenophobia on every side, an aim that should be easier to

achieve when the nation's very survival is not at stake; to rear up a larger Arab intelligentsia (whatever the risks—for the risks of not doing so are even greater); and to ameliorate the multitude of social problems that beset all Israelis. (Incredibly enough, illiteracy is one of these. In a fairly advanced country such as Israel, with a population of 3.5 million people, nearly 1 million are functional illiterates.) Only a recommitment to libertarian and egalitarian ideals, and nothing less, can save the soul of Israel. It is almost but not yet too late to begin again. □

On Hearing Huber Matos Speak

He is a small man, neatly turned out, compact, looking maybe like the chap who runs your stationary store, reminding me improbably of William Faulkner, quiet, dignified, never raising his voice. He speaks before some two dozen people at a gathering called by the League for Industrial Democracy. I sit there, a little stunned, trying to digest the thought that this man is a hero of our time, unsung, uncelebrated.

Huber Matos was a comrade-in-arms of Fidel Castro, fighting in the campaign to overthrow the Batista dictatorship; when it became clear that Fidel was intent upon establishing another, more efficient dictatorship, Matos sent him a letter asking simply to be allowed to withdraw from politics, pull out of "the movement," and return to teaching school. For that unforgivable crime he was tried by a Castro court, sentenced to 20 years in prison, where he refused to accept indoctrination, often was subject to long periods of solitary confinement and other humiliations, and watched his own body disintegrate. He stood fast. He would not bow to the dictator, and the price he paid was—20 years.

Think of it, 20 years, not a day less, no parole or time off for "good behavior," such as you can get in the decadent bourgeois countries.

He talks without bitterness, his flowing Spanish translated into halting English by a son whom he barely knew until his release a few months ago. He does not talk about himself, he asks for no sympathy or mercy, he even corrects the chairman who has said that Matos "sacrificed" half his life. No, it is not a sacrifice to be in prison for the right to speak freely. He speaks for the prisoners remaining in Castro's camps and prisons, describing the way those who remain

intransigent in their opposition to Castro must suffer in endless ways, from poor medical treatment to contrived humiliations. These prisoners are the forgotten men of our time, for even liberals and radicals who cry out against repressions in other Communist countries hesitate—*do they not?*—to attack the Castro regime. "Cuba is different," they say. More vengeful: is that how it is different?

In the discussion Stanley Plastrik asks Matos a question,

I understand you to say that you would be opposed to a new Bay of Pigs operation. Where does that put you in relation to the Cuban exile groups, some of whom would like to see an external liberation?

Matos answers,

The campaign in which I am involved in the United States is of an ideological nature. For the time being I think what I have to do is to give political orientation to the "good" Cubans in exile. As for the "bad" ones, I don't really care about them. . . . In Cuba there is no chance for any organized dissident movement. In Cuba you cannot even paint a few words on a wall, as you can in Peking. Repression is the one thing that works well in Cuba. Still, there is resistance, anonymous, individual, unseen.

The perspective for freedom in Cuba is long-range, says Matos, and the main task he sets himself is speaking for the prisoners who remain there.

Quiet, reflective, mildly humorous. But, for 20 years, unyielding, unbending. What does a hero look like? Obviously, in our fantasies, not like Huber Matos? Then, we should remake the image of the hero: a hero in the 20th century is one who retains his humanity.

IRVING HOWE □

Frank Parkin

The Academicizing of Marxism

Although schisms are nothing new to Western Marxism, the past decade or so has witnessed one doctrinal parting of the ways that is without precedent in the annals of this troubled theory. I refer to the ever-widening gulf between the Marxism of the European working-class movement and the brand of Marxism propagated in the European universities. At more or less the same time as the major Communist parties were, one by one, abandoning their commitment to the “revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” and endorsing some form or other of that version of parliamentary Marxism known as Eurocommunism, the universities were disseminating Marxist ideas completely at variance with this accommodating stance. It was as if the center of political gravity had shifted from the working-class movement to the academy and the custody of Marxist theory had passed from the party leadership to the new professoriate.

This university-based Marxism was not, of course, all of a piece; there were, and still are, many local varieties. But undoubtedly the most influential of all has been that school of thought inspired by Louis Althusser and his disciples—particularly Nicos Poulantzas and Etienne Balibar. Althusserian Marxism has struck roots in sociology and political science departments throughout the non-Communist world, and there cannot now be many languages that do not have their own version of the exotic vocabulary Althusserians seem to require for common discourse.

That this kind of Marxism should have such widespread appeal is both surprising and worrying, given the palpable discrepancies between its grand theoretical claims and its

puny explanatory performance. Althusser and his followers make much of the “scientific” status of their theories, though to an agnostic eye these appear to be either banal or simply absurd. By way of illustration it may be useful to consider the treatment of two problems fundamental to Marxism: the analysis of class under modern capitalism, and the theory of system collapse and social transformation.

Poulantzas is the leading exponent of class theory working within the Althusserian schema, and his numerous publications add up to the most ambitious attempt to solve what he refers to as the “boundary problem”—that is, the location of the politically relevant line of class cleavage under monopoly capitalism.¹ One of the standard difficulties encountered by classical Marxism is that of translating the conceptual abstractions of capital and labor into the concrete social categories of bourgeoisie and proletariat. These difficulties have arisen in part because the bourgeoisie and middle class under advanced capitalism have tended to expand well beyond the boundaries set by property ownership; and in part because the proletariat has contracted to a point where it is considerably less than the total of “wage labor.” This has resulted in the need to account for the theoretical status of those intermediate groups that cannot be placed unequivocally on either side of the class boundary. In Marx’s own formulation, the social space between the two great classes was deemed to become progressively less habitable as the centrifugal forces of class struggle flung all intermediate groups into one camp or the other. The characters singled out

for liquidation in this historical drama were those upon whom capitalism had already passed sentence: the small traders, artisans, shopkeepers, and peasants. Their fate was sealed by the fact that they were marginal to a productive system that was gradually intruding into every corner of society.

But although Marxism seemed to offer a plausible enough account of the decline of the old petty bourgeoisie, awkward questions were at once raised by the discovery that the social territory vacated by this obsolete stratum was found to be occupied by a newcomer in the guise of the "new middle class." The problem posed by this new intermediate stratum was that, unlike its predecessor, it was in no sense marginal to the capitalist productive system but an integral feature of it. Since it was not historically doomed it had to be incorporated somehow into the general class model.

Althusserians have addressed themselves to this task with the aim of rebutting the analyses offered by both academic sociology and the "vulgar Marxists" of the working-class movement. The sociological account of the new middle class, which is held up as typifying bourgeois theory in general, is that which equates the rise of a new white-collar stratum with the virtual dissolution of class and class conflict. In this account, the expansion of the white-collar sector is said to result in a shift from a pyramid-shaped class system with a heavy proletarian base to a diamond-shaped system with a large "middle mass" and an ever-diminishing working class. On this reckoning the proletariat is scheduled to follow the old petty bourgeoisie down the path to political extinction.

Poulantzas's own account of the new middle class, or the new petty bourgeoisie as he calls it, is designed not only to reassert the political potential and status of the modern proletariat against the claims of sociology; it is intended also as a critique of the class analysis favored by the strategists of Eurocommunism. The Eurocommunists have tended to conceive of the principal class division as existing at the very top of the social hierarchy, so that the category of working

class is understood in the broadest possible terms. This means that the frontiers of class are drawn by reference to expressly political criteria; the crucial division is between those social groups whose functions are necessary only to capitalism, and those whose services would be required in a socialist society. Landlords, *rentiers*, property speculators, stockbrokers, etc. are part of the bourgeoisie. Their activities would not be transferable to the new society, thereby giving them a vested interest in the survival of capitalism. By contrast, all those groups that have a future under socialism, including most of the new middle class, are by this very fact part of that heterogeneous political class known as "the people," whose interests are objectively opposed to those of the bourgeoisie. The strategy of Eurocommunism is thus to emphasize the minority character of the political opposition, and to proclaim the unity of all who sell their labor, whatever the color of their collar.²

IT IS THIS CONCEPTION of class that the Althusserians anathematize as the new revisionism and a recipe for the political defeat of the working class. Poulantzas rejects the line of thought that equates the category of wage labor with membership in the working class—an equation that would seem to bear an uncomfortably close affinity to the familiar conservative claim that "today we are *all* working class." Many groups sell their labor and are exploited by capital, but few it seems qualify for proletarian status. Poulantzas introduces two classificatory devices that are intended to identify the kernel of the working class within the swollen husk of wage labor. The first of these is the distinction between productive and unproductive labor. This is a distinction that bears not upon the actual nature of the work performed but on the social context of its performance. Very simply, productive labor is that which yields surplus value, unproductive labor is that which does not. Expressed more formally, productive labor is that which is exchanged against capital to produce surplus, whereas

unproductive labor is merely a charge against revenue. Thus, the barber who trims Marx's beard is performing unproductive labor if he is working on his own account, since the service provided is essentially no different from that given by a household servant. Each entails a charge against revenue and makes no direct contribution to capital accumulation.

If, on the other hand, Marx's barber is a paid employee, he is performing productive labor by creating surplus value for the barbershop owner. On a somewhat more elevated plane, the unproductive category is also said to comprise state employees, whose incomes are met by taxation. Taxes are siphoned off from the wages of productive workers or from surplus value, so that in effect the labor of "state servants" is akin to that of household servants in being a charge against revenue and making no contribution to capital wealth.

The crucial point of all this is that only those workers whose labor is productive in this special sense are candidates for inclusion in the proletariat. Unproductive laborers are dismissed to the ranks of the new petty bourgeoisie. In other words, the status of *exploited* labor is theoretically downgraded, as it were, by comparison with its unproductive status; it is the latter that now settles the issue of class location.* The effect of this is that the line of class demarcation is drawn at a considerably lower point in the social hierarchy than it is in the classical Marxist model.

Furthermore, this invisible line is pushed down still further by the addition of Poulantzas's second distinction, that between mental and manual labor. Mental labor is simply

conceptual shorthand for those occupations that include elements of a supervisory or disciplinary nature, as well as professional occupations that enjoy special privileges by virtue of their claim to the "monopoly and secrecy of knowledge."³

Now those who perform supervisory functions are not only wage workers but usually productive laborers to boot, in so far as they are just as instrumental in creating surplus value for the capitalist as the workers whose activities they oversee. However, the performance of mental or supervisory labor is, in Poulantzas's taxonomy, automatic ground for exclusion from the proletariat and inclusion within the new petty bourgeoisie. Technicians, engineers, foremen, and the like—far from occupying the vanguard role assigned to them by some French theorists of the "May events" of 1968—do not, according to Poulantzas, "belong to the working class . . . because in their place within the social division of labour they maintain political and ideological relations of subordination of the working class to capital . . . and because this aspect of their class determination is the dominant one."⁴

Combining Poulantzas's two sets of variables we thus arrive at four distinct types of wage labor: productive mental, productive manual, unproductive mental, and unproductive manual. Only the productive manual category counts as working class; it is the only form of wage labor that contributes to surplus value without at the same time being implicated in the apparatus of supervision and control. All the remaining categories comprise different elements of the new petty bourgeoisie, and are thus politically suspect.

One of the peculiar effects of this schema is to posit a concealed conflict of interests between productive and unproductive workers on the grounds that the latter are in some sense parasitic upon the former. This is similar to a position advanced some time ago by Paul Sweezy, who suggested that those workers whose wages were met from surplus value to which they made no direct contribution had by this very token "an objective bond linking their fortunes with those of the ruling

*Let me stress that the distinction between productive labor and exploited labor is one that is pressed by the Althusserians rather than by me. Poulantzas quite firmly argues that wage workers who do not perform productive labor (in the Marxist sense) are nevertheless typically exploited labor (also in the Marxist sense).

Wage earners in commerce, advertising, etc., do not produce surplus-value and do not form part of the working class . . . Of course these wage earners are themselves exploited, and their wages correspond to the reproduction of their labor power. [Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, pp. 211-12.]

class.”⁵ Here again it would seem that the opposition between workers who create value and those who are a drain upon it is thought to override all unity arising on the basis of a shared exploitation. Poulantzas offers no evidence to indicate that the distinction between productive and unproductive labor has any bearing on the political or trade-union activities of different groups of workers. Generally, of course, productive and unproductive workers can be found side by side in the same labor union and the same political party. Clearly, the Althusserian message that they have different class locations and different class interests has not yet got through.

If, moreover, the ratio of unproductive to productive workers is continually increasing, the implication of this analysis for the future of the labor movement is somewhat startling. As one of Poulantzas’s sympathetic critics plaintively declares, the strict application of his criteria reduces the American working class to pygmy proportions, thus ruling out any possibility of socialism in the United States.⁶ It is somewhat ironic that a theory intended, among other things, as a rebuttal of a sociological model of class that seemed to extinguish the proletariat should itself propose a set of definitions pointing to a similar conclusion. Poulantzas’s recent reply to this objection is a vintage piece of Althusserian reasoning. The American working class, he suggests, must be defined in an “imperial context.” That is to say, all workers employed by American capital, in whatever country, must be regarded as proxy members of the American proletariat.⁷ At one conceptual stroke this class is immediately transformed from one of the smallest to the largest proletariat in the capitalist sphere!

ALTHOUGH ALTHUSSERIANS SEEK to place as much distance as possible between their own brand of theorizing and that of academic social science, they are not above smuggling into their work certain “bourgeois” concepts and usages, albeit under substitute names. The most telling example of this is the tacit

acknowledgment of the role of *authority* in the determination of class position. This arises from the need to find some general principle by which the “managerial class” can be accorded the same bourgeois status as the owners of capital, despite the fact that managers are, in the main, also sellers of labor power. Managerial authority would seem, in fact, to have supplanted property ownership as the defining attribute of a capitalist class. According to Carchedi, “the manager, rather than the capitalist rentier, is the central figure; he, rather than the capitalist rentier, is the non-labourer, the non-producer, the exploiter. He, rather than the capitalist rentier, is capital personified.”⁸

Interestingly, by proclaiming that the supervision and control of subordinates is the new hallmark of bourgeois status, Althusserians have come surprisingly close to endorsing Ralf Dahrendorf’s view of the determinate role of authority in establishing the class boundary.⁹ Their strict avoidance of this term in favor of some synonym or circumlocution (“mental labor,” “labor of superintendence”) is perhaps a tacit admission of this embarrassing affinity with Dahrendorf’s position. Although none of these writers would accept Dahrendorf’s proposition that authority is a general phenomenon that encompasses property, it is nevertheless the case that their treatment of authority relations, however phrased, takes up far more of their analysis than the discussion of property relations. The reason for this is not too difficult to fathom. To make property relations the centerpiece of class analysis would bring with it the duty of explaining precisely why the apparatus of managerial authority and control was thought to depend upon the institution of private ownership.

It has presumably come to the attention of Althusserians that societies that have done away with property in its private forms nevertheless have their own interesting little ways of seeing to the “superintendence of labor.” The view that managerial control and authority are a unique product of capitalism must rest on a belief that these things are ordered in a very different way under

“socialism” in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But unfortunately class and authority relations under “socialism” are not deemed suitable topics for discussion by the Althusserians. After all, supposing they were to discover that factory despotism, the coercive uses of knowledge, and the privileges of mental labor were present not only in societies where the manager was “capital personified,” but also in societies where he was the Communist party personified? They would then be faced with the unwelcome choice of either having to expand the definition of capitalism to embrace “socialist” society, or of disowning the cherished concepts of private property and surplus extraction upon which their class theory is grounded. Their obvious reluctance to engage in the comparative analysis of class under capitalism and under “socialism” is therefore understandable. As for the credibility of Althusserian class theory, the very existence of “socialist” society is about the worst possible advertisement for it.

A further instructive insight into this new scientific Marxism is afforded by the theory of system breakdown and social transformation. This theory is spelled out by Althusser in the course of his general restatement of the relationship between base and superstructure. In Marx’s own formulation, the social and institutional character of society is held to be governed by the nature of its productive system; the mode of material life effectively shapes the political, legal, and ideological forms, so that when the productive base undergoes a radical transformation the superstructural features of that society will undergo a corresponding change, too. Almost all of Marx’s subsequent analyses of class conflict, property relations, internal contradictions, and the direction and causation of historical change hinge directly upon this assertion of a *determinate* relationship between base and superstructure. This proposition could, indeed, be regarded as the theoretical core of historical materialism,

upon whose foundation classical Marxism stands or falls.

Althusser, by contrast, presents the relationship between base and superstructure as an essentially *reciprocal* affair.¹⁰ In his version, the superstructure not only enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy from the base, it has a definite feedback effect upon it. Moreover, Althusser suggests that the notion of internal contradictions has wider applicability than Marx himself recognized. In its original form the thesis states that contradictions between the social forces of production and the social relations of production lead to system crisis and ultimate collapse. But this thesis, Althusser argues, must be supplemented by another stating that contradictions are not confined to the material base but are endemic in the superstructure, too. All the main elements of the superstructure evolve and develop at a different pace—Althusser calls this the “law of uneven development”—so that the degree of compatibility or “fit” between these different elements is crucial to the stability of the overall system. Revolutionary or crisis situations are never sparked off by purely material factors; rather, there must be a cumulative buildup or amplification of general contradictions before the mechanism of collapse is finally triggered off. This is what Althusser calls the process of “overdetermination,” referring to a condition in which the key elements of the superstructure have reached a certain point of combustion, such that they are able to ignite the explosive mix produced by contradictions in the base. Thus, an Althusserian explanation for the continued survival of capitalist states (despite their intense and recurrent economic crises) is that the superstructural elements are not sufficiently out of joint to produce the necessary climax of overdetermination.

What all this really amounts to is one more version of the commonplace argument that revolutionary change comes about as a result of many complex factors at work simultaneously. It is in other words a multicausal explanation similar to that advocated by almost any political or social theorist working

within the tradition of orthodox social science. What gave the original Marxist proposition its distinctiveness, and its intellectual impact, was the heavy theoretical weighting it gave to one specific set of factors as the causal mechanism of social change. Althusser's revision of this proposition results, in effect, in the removal of Marx's vital notion of causal primacy. The Althusserian model is one in which contradictions within the superstructure have virtually equal standing with those within the productive sphere, in which none is singled out as having decisive importance in the process of system collapse. The condition of "overdetermination" refers to a particular conjuncture or constellation of different elements as providing the key to system change. And, of course, such a conjuncture cannot be specified a priori but can only be understood in the context of a specific society at a specific period. In some societies it will be one particular conjuncture of elements that produces the explosive mix, in other societies or at other times it will be a different conjuncture.

In plain English, it all depends on local circumstances.

THUS, WHAT PURPORTS TO BE a theory of system change based upon a new analysis of the superstructure turns out on closer inspection to be an invitation to descriptive empiricism. The classical thesis of historical materialism does at least provide some hint of what is entailed in the notion of contradiction between the social forces of production and the social relations of production. It is not especially obscure to argue, for example, that the legal institutions of feudalism are incompatible with a mode of production based upon a market economy and the free movement of labor. Here it does indeed seem that something has to give. But what are the equivalent contradictions that arise *within* the superstructure? It is hardly sufficient to assert simply that all the elements of the superstructure evolve and develop at a different pace and in divergent directions, since this in itself need not necessarily lead to any kind of crisis.

Althusser's answer seems to be that we can only be certain that the superstructure has reached combustion point after the event. He tells us that socialist revolution "could only break out . . . in Russia, in China, in Cuba, in 1917, in 1949, in 1958, and not elsewhere; and not in another 'situation' . . ." ¹¹ Nothing is offered by way of explanation to show that the superstructures in these three societies at these particular times were in some way differently constituted from the superstructures of other capitalist societies. In the absence of this kind of comparative information, all we are left with is one more addition to that long line of theories useful only for predicting the past.

The Althusserian account of the emergence of fascism seems to point to a similar conclusion. Starting from the assumption that the entire capitalist system in the interwar period was in a state of severe crisis, the problem is to explain why some capitalist societies developed in the direction of fascism while others held fast to bourgeois democracy. What common features can be discerned in the make-up of German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese society that were conducive to a "fascist solution" that were absent in the United States, Britain, France, and Scandinavia?

THE ALTHUSSERIAN OPENING GAMBIT is to stress the generic and universal features of capitalism as the main components of the explanatory model, i.e., those features that are taken to be the defining characteristics of capitalism and are therefore present in some combination or other in all capitalist societies. At the same time due recognition is given to the fact that each society is culturally and historically unique and so will combine the basic features of the system in its own special way. This idea is enshrined in the "law of uneven development," which, as already mentioned, postulates that the various institutions of capitalism evolve and develop at a different pace and in a somewhat different manner. The problem for Althusserian science is how to strike a proper balance between the general scope of its global model

and the particularizing slant that stresses local variety and distinctiveness. No explanation is deemed satisfactory that does not engage directly with the facts of the purely national context; but, at the same time, if these purely national factors are weighted too heavily the explanation would be couched in terms of cultural peculiarities and traditions, and unique historical experiences, which are not essential ingredients of a capitalist system as defined by the general model.

Thus, in seeking to account for the vulnerability of certain bourgeois societies to fascism, Althusserians attempt to integrate the variety of local and specific causes into some general, global explanation. In Poulantzas's treatment of the problem, the notion of an "imperial stage" is felt to provide the necessary theoretical framework for examining each national variant of fascism:

Fascism in effect belongs to the imperialist *stage* of capitalism. The point is therefore to try to elucidate certain general characteristics of the stage, and their impact on fascism. The primary causes of fascism are not the factors often seen as its basic *sine qua non*, such as the particular economic crises Germany and Italy were caught in when fascism was establishing itself, the national peculiarities of the two countries, the consequences of the First World War, etc. These factors are important only in relation to the stage of imperialism, as elements *of one of the possible conjunctures* of this stage.¹²

Without the international antagonism arising from the imperialist crisis, the national stresses and strains so conscientiously documented by bourgeois writers would not lead to the kind of breakdown that prepares the way for fascism. The global crisis of capitalism in the imperialist stage creates a general disposition to a fascist solution in *all* capitalist societies, which is then triggered off in a certain few. But the fact that the accumulation of tensions and contradictions is politically manageable in some societies but not in others must also be accounted for by recourse to some general proposition if the descent to bourgeois particularism is to be avoided. The assumption must be that Italy, Germany, Spain, etc., combined the elements

of the capitalist matrix in such a way as to render them especially vulnerable to the external pressures emanating from the global crisis. What, then, is the nature of the fatal flaw running through these societies that distinguishes them from the rest?

Poulantzas's answer is that fascism triumphed in those countries that were the "weakest links" in the capitalist chain. These links gave way under the extreme tension that the entire international chain was subjected to; and the Italian and German links gave way first because of their peculiar internal weaknesses. In the case of Italy, this was to do with the contradictions set up between an industrializing north and a backward, agricultural south. In the German case, it arose largely as a result of the country's late entry onto the imperialist stage. France, Britain, and the United States, Poulantzas tells us, were also "affected by the transition to monopoly capitalism and by 'economic crises.' But they do not have the accumulation of contradictions which typify Germany and Italy."¹³ For any society known to have embraced fascism Poulantzas is ready to disclose that it was wracked by contradictions sufficiently intense to qualify it for membership in the family of weak links. It therefore comes as no surprise to be told that, after Italy and Germany, "Spain in its turn became the nodal point of imperialist contradictions in Europe."¹⁴ Poulantzas's theory is resoundingly confirmed by the fact that none of the societies whose internal tensions were politically manageable took the route to fascism; that is, none of the strong links snapped under tension, while all the weak ones did.

SINCE THE ACCUMULATED contradictions beloved by Althusserian theory sometimes prepare the ground for socialism and sometimes for fascism, it would be of more than passing interest to know in what way the contradictions preceding the one differ from the contradictions preceding the other. Poulantzas does seem to recognize the problem:

... although the revolution was made in the weakest link in the chain (Russia), fascism arose in the next two links, i.e., those which were, relatively speaking, the weakest in Europe at the time. In no sense do I mean that fascism was fated to happen there, any more than the Bolshevik Revolution was fated to occur in the weakest link. I simply mean that in the particular *conjunctures* of class struggle in these countries, which for a whole series of reasons led to such different results, their position in the imperialist chain was of crucial importance.¹⁵

Not even a few of the “whole series of reasons” that lay behind the transformation of one weak link into fascism, another into socialism, are thought to be worth mentioning. All the enquiring mind needs to know, it seems, is that fascism and socialism emerged only in those countries where the superstructural conditions were ripe for their respective outcomes, and nowhere else. And we know whether or not any given superstructure was in fact ripe for either event because of the way things actually turned out. Of such stuff is Althusserian science made.

This science, it should be said, is a typical product of the new intellectual stratum of professorial Marxists. Postwar Western Marxism in its many varieties is almost wholly the creation of academic social theorists who rose on the crest of the wave of university expansion in the 1960s. Virtually all the leading Marxist notables today are university teachers: Althusser, Poulantzas, Balibar, Habermas, Offe, Carchedi, Mandel, Miliband, etc., etc. It is difficult to name any leading Marxist theorist who now earns his keep in the service of the working-class movement rather than in the service of the university. Contrast this with the position of the leading theorists of Marxism in its heyday: Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Rosa

Luxemburg, Kautsky, Bernstein—all of whom, without exception, were full-time political activists. Their Marxism, for better or worse, was addressed specifically to the interests of the working class and the problems of the labor movement. The new Marxism, by contrast, is addressed not to the working-class movement but to the massed ranks of undergraduates and postgraduate students in the social sciences; its content and design mark it out exclusively for use in the lecture hall, the seminar room, and in the doctoral dissertation.

As if to make secure its newly won respectability, professorial Marxism, in the manner of all exclusive bodies, carries out its discourse through the medium of an arcane language that might have been especially designed to deter the uninitiated. Thus, Althusser's major work comes complete with a lengthy glossary to render intelligible the Master's private terminology. Certainly, no one could accuse the Marxist professoriate of spreading the kinds of ideas likely to cause a stampede to the barricades or the picket lines. Indeed, the uncomplicated theory that has traditionally inspired that sort of extra-mural activity is now rather loftily dismissed as “vulgar Marxism”—literally, the Marxism of “the common people.”

It is an intriguing thought that the Althusserians' obsession with the problems of the superstructure, touched upon in this essay, might not be completely unrelated to their own social circumstances and milieu. After all, it is one of the central tenets of the Marxist theory of knowledge that the nature of any system of ideas is related in some way to the class or social position of its proponents. Perhaps this is a line of inquiry that might usefully be followed up by the Marxist professoriate itself. □

NOTES

¹Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1975).

²For a fuller discussion of this argument see my *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), upon which this essay freely draws.

³Poulantzas, *Classes*. . . , p. 270.

⁴Poulantzas, *Classes*. . . , p. 242.

⁵P. M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (London: Dobson, 1946), p. 284.

⁶Erik Olin Wright, “Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies,” *New Left Review*, (93) 1976, p. 23.

⁷Nicos Poulantzas, "The New Petty Bourgeoisie," in A. Hunt, ed., *Class and Class Structure* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977), p. 119.

⁸G. Carchedi, "On the Economic Identification of the New Middle Class," *Economy and Society*, (4:1) 1975, p. 48.

⁹Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (London: Routledge, 1959).

¹⁰Louis Althusser, "Contradiction and Overdetermination," in *For Marx* (Harmondsworth: Penguin

Books, 1969); and "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1971).

¹¹Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 207.

¹²Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 17.

¹³Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship*, p. 34.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 24. □



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William J. Goode

Why Men Resist

Although few if any men in the United States remain entirely untouched by the women's movement, to most men what is happening seems to be "out there," having little direct effect on their own lives. The movement is, to them, a dialogue mainly among women, conferences of women about women, a mixture of just or exaggerated complaints and shrill and foolish demands to which men need not even respond, except now and then. When men see that a woman friend resents a common male act of condescension, such as making fun of women in sports or management, most males are still as surprised as corporation heads are when told to stop polluting a river.

If one focuses on the short run only, men are correct in this perception, for it is not often that social behavior so deeply rooted in tradition will alter rapidly. Over the longer run, however, they are not likely to be correct, and indeed I believe they are vaguely uneasy when they consider their present situation. As against numerous popular commentators, I do not think we are now witnessing a return to the old ways, a politically reactionary trend, or that the contemporary attack on male privilege will ultimately fail.

The worldwide demand for equality is not voiced by women only, and it has been pressed with more persistence, strength, and success over the past generation than in any prior epoch of world history. It has also been pressed by more kinds of people than ever before: ethnic and racial groups, castes, subnational groups such as the Scots or

Basques, classes, colonies, and political regimes. An ideal so profoundly moving will ultimately prevail in some measure where the structural bases for traditional dominance are weakened. The ancient bases for male dominance are no longer as secure as they once were, and male resistance to these pressures will weaken.

Males will stubbornly resist but reluctantly adjust, because women will continue to want more equality than they now enjoy, and women will be unhappy if they do not get it; because men on the average will prefer that their women be happy; because neither will find an adequate substitute for the other sex; and because neither will be able to find an alternative social system. When dominant classes or groups cannot rig the system as much in their favor as they once did, they will work within it just the same; to revise an old adage, if this is the only roulette wheel in town, they will play it even if it is honest and fair.

To many women, the very title of this essay is an exercise in banality, for there is no puzzle. To analyze the peculiar thoughtways of men seems to be unnecessary, since ultimately their resistance is that of dominant groups throughout history: they enjoy an exploitative position yielding them an unearned profit in money, power, and prestige. Why should they give it up?

The answer contains of course some part of the truth, but we shall move more effectively toward equality only if we grasp much more of the truth than that bitter view reveals. If it

were completely true, then the greater power of men would have made all societies malevanity cultures, in which women are kept behind blank walls and forced to work at productive tasks only with their sisters, while men lazed away their hours in parasitic pleasure. In fact, one can observe that the position of women varies a good deal by class, by society, and over time, and no one has succeeded as yet in proving that those variations are the result of nothing more complicated than men's exploitation.

Indeed, there are inherent socioeconomic contradictions within any attempt by males to create a fully exploitative set of material advantages for all males. Moreover, there are also inherent *emotional* contradictions in any effort to achieve full domination in that intimate sphere.

As to the first contradiction, women—just like men in the same situation—who are utterly powerless, slavish, and ignorant are most easily exploitable, and thus there are always some male pressures to place them in that position. Unfortunately, such women do not yield very much surplus product. In fact, they do not produce much. Women who are freer and also more in command of productive skills, as in hunting and gathering societies and increasingly in modern industrial ones, produce far more, but they are also more resistant to exploitation or domination. Without understanding that powerful relationship, men have moved throughout history toward one or the other of these great choices, with their built-in advantages and disadvantages.

As to the emotional ties, men would like to be lords of their castle, and to be loved absolutely—if successful, it is the cheapest exploitative system—but in real life this is less likely to happen unless one loves in return. In that case what happens is what happens in real life: men do care about the joys and sorrows of their women. Mutual caring reduces the degree to which men are willing to exploit their own wives, mothers, and sisters. More interesting, their caring also takes the form of wanting to prevent *other* men from exploiting those same women, when the women go into

the outside world. That is, men as individuals know that *they* are to be trusted, and so should have great power, but other men cannot be trusted, and the laws should restrain such fellows.

These large sets of contrary tensions have some effect on even those contemporary men who do not believe that the present relations between men and women are unjust. Both sets, moreover, support the present trend toward greater equality. Men do resist, but these and other tensions prevent them from resisting so fully as they might otherwise, while not so fully as a cynical interpretation of their private attitudes would suggest. On the other hand, they do resist somewhat more strenuously than we should expect from their public assertion in favor of, for example, equal pay, or slogans like "liberty and justice for all."

What I can say is limited. Even to present the latest data on the supposed psychological traits of males would require more space than we have before us here. I shall not map out all the male roles of even this society, or report to you how many men now carry out their prescribed tasks or enjoy the privileges assigned to them. I shall try to avoid the temptation of simply describing men's reactions to the women's liberation movement, although I do plan to inform you of men's attitudes toward some aspects of equality. I shall try to avoid defending men, except to the extent that explaining them may be a defense. And, as is obvious, I shall not assert that we are on the brink of a profound, sudden change in sex-role allocations, in the direction of equality—for we must never underestimate either the cunning or the staying power of those in charge. Finally, it is unlikely that I can bring forward many findings that are entirely new. At best, I can suggest some fruitful, perhaps new, ways of looking at male roles.

WITHIN THOSE LIMITATIONS, I shall focus on the following themes:

(1) As against the rather narrow definition of men's roles to be found in the current

literature on the topic, I want to bring to mind a much wider range of traditionally approved roles, in this and other cultures.

(2) As against the conspiracy theory of feminine oppression, I shall suggest a modest "sociology of the dominant group," to interpret men's behavior and thinking about male roles, and thus some modest hypotheses about why they resist.

(3) I shall point to two central areas of role behavior, occupations, and domestic tasks, where change seems glacial at present and men's resistance strong.

(4) As against those who feel that if utopia does not arrive with the next full moon we should all despair, I shall point to some processes now occurring that are quite different from any in recorded history and that will continue to press toward more fundamental changes in men's social positions and roles in this and other countries around the world.

The Range of Sex Roles

LET ME BEGIN by bringing to mind the standard sociological view or doctrine about the allocation of sex roles both masculine and feminine. Although it is agreed that we can, with only small error, divide the population into males and females, the biological differences between the two that might affect the distribution of sex roles—which sex is supposed to do which social tasks, which should have which rights—are much too small to determine the large differences in sex-role allocation within any given society, or to explain the curious doctrines that serve to uphold it. Second, even if there are some differences that would give an advantage to men (or to women) in some kinds of tasks or achievements, the overlap in talent is so great that a large minority of men (or women) could do any task as well as members of the other sex. Third, the biological differences are too fixed in anatomy and physiology, to account for the wide diversity of sex-role allocation that we observe when we compare different societies over time and cultures.

Consequently, most of sex-role allocation

must be explained by how we rear children, by the social pressures we put on the members of the two sexes, and by the cultural definitions of what is appropriate to the sexes. Since human beings created these assignments of roles, they can also change them. On the other hand, those roles afford large advantages to men, in this and every other society we know, i.e., opportunity, range of choices, mobility, payoffs for what is accomplished, cultivation of skills, authority, and prestige. Consequently, men are likely to resist large alterations in their roles. They will do so even though they understand that in exchange for those privileges, they have to pay high costs in morbidity, mortality, and failure.¹ As a consequence of this fact about men's position, it can be supposed that they will resist unless their ability to rig the system in their favor is somehow reduced. It is my belief that this capacity is in fact being undermined somewhat, though not at a rapid rate.

A first glance at descriptions of the male role, especially as it is described in the literature about mass media, social stereotypes, family roles, and personality attributes, suggests that the male role is definite, narrow, and agreed upon. Males, we are told, are pressed into a specific mold. For example, "...the male role prescribes that men be active, aggressive, competitive, ... while the female role prescribes that women should be nurturant, warm, altruistic ... and the like."² The male role requires the suppression of emotion, or "the male role, as personally and socially defined, requires men to appear tough, objective, striving, achieving, unsentimental ... if he weeps, if he shows weakness, he will likely be viewed as unmanly" Or: "Men are programmed to be strong and 'aggressive.'"³

We are so accustomed to reading such descriptions that we can almost believe them, unless we stop to ask, *first*, how many of the men we know actually carry out these role prescriptions, i.e., how many are emotionally anesthetized, aggressive, physically tough, and daring, unwilling or unable to give nurturance to a child, and so on? And then we

ask, *second*—this is the test of a social role—do they lose their membership cards in the male fraternity when they fail in these respects? If socialization and social pressures are so all-powerful, where are all the John Wayne types in our society? Or, to ask a more searching question, how seriously should we take such sex-role prescriptions, if so few men live up to them?

The key fact is not that men do not live up to such prescriptions. It is, rather, that many other kinds of qualities and performances are also viewed as acceptable or admirable, and this is true even among boys, who are often thought to be strong supporters of sex stereotypes. The *macho* boy is admired, but so is the one who edits the school newspaper, who draws cartoons, or who is simply a warm friend. There are at least a handful of ways of being an admired professor. Indeed, a common feminist complaint against the present system is that women are much more narrowly confined in the ways they are permitted to be professors, or members of any occupation.

But we can go further than that reminder of our own observations. The more profound observation is that oppressed groups are *typically* given much narrower ranges of social roles, while dominant groups afford their members a far wider set of behavior patterns, each qualitatively rather different but each still accepted or esteemed in varying degrees. It is precisely one of the privileges granted, or simply assumed, by ruling groups, that they can indulge in a variety of eccentricities while still demanding and getting a fair measure of authority or prestige. Consider in this connection, to cite only one spectacular example, the crotchets and quirks cultivated by the English upper classes over the centuries.

Moreover, if we enlarge our vision to encompass other times and places, the range becomes even greater. We are not surprised to observe Latin-American men embrace one another, Arab or Indian boys walk together hand in hand, or seminary students being gentle. The male role prescriptions that commonly appear in the literature do not

describe correctly the male ideal in Jewish culture, which embodied a love of music, learning, and literature; an avoidance of physical violence used on others; an acceptance of tears and sentiment, nurturance, and a sensitivity to others' feelings. In the South that I knew half a century ago, young rural boys were expected to nurture their younger siblings, and male-male relations were ideally expected to be tender, supporting, and to be expressed occasionally by embraces. Among my own kin, some fathers then kissed their school-age sons, and among Greek-Americans in New York City that practice continued many decades later. Or, to consider England once more, let us remember the admired men of Elizabethan England. True enough, one ideal was the violent, daring Francis Drake, and the brawling poet Ben Jonson. But men also expressed themselves in kissing and embracing, writing love poems to one another, in donning decorative not to say gaudy clothing, and in studies of flowers as well as the fiery heavens.

We assert, then, that men do manage to be in charge of things in all societies, but their very control permits them to create a wide range of ideal male roles, with the consequence that large numbers of men, and not just a few, can locate rewarding positions in the social structure. Thereby, too, they considerably narrow the options left for feminine sex roles.⁴

We can recognize that general relationship in a widespread male view, echoed over the centuries, that males are people, individuals, while women are lumped together as an aggregate; or in more modern language: women have roles, a delimited number of parts to play, but men cannot be described so simply.

Nor is that peculiar male view contradicted by the complaint, again found in all major civilizations, that women are mysterious, unpredictable, moved by forces outside of men's understanding, and not controllable. Even that master of psychodynamics, Sigmund Freud, expressed his bewilderment by asking, "What do women want?" Men have

found their women difficult to understand for a simple reason: they continue to try to think of them in terms of a defined set of roles, but in fact women did not fit them, not only not now, but not in the past either. Some were great fighting machines, not compliant; some were competitive and aggressive, not nurturant; many were incompetent or reluctant mothers; and so on. At any point, men could observe that women were ignoring or breaking out of their social molds, and men experienced that discrepancy as puzzling. However, it is only recently that many have faced the blunt fact that there is no feminine riddle at all: women are as complex as men are, and will always escape the confinements of any narrow set of roles.

The Sociology of Superordinates

HOWEVER, that set of relationships is only part of the complex male view, and I want to state several further elements in what may be called the "sociology of superordinates." That is, I believe there are some general principles or regularities to be found in the view held by superordinates—here, the sex-class called males—about relations with subordinates, in this instance the women. These regularities do not justify, but they do explain in some degree, the modern resistance of men to their new social situation.⁵

A PARTIAL DESCRIPTION of the male view can be described by several broad principles.

(1) The observations made by either men or women about members of the other sex are limited and somewhat biased by what they are most interested in, and by their lack of opportunity to observe behind the scenes of each others' lives.⁶ However, far less of what men do is determined by women, while what men do affects women much more. As a consequence, men are often simply less motivated to observe carefully many aspects of women's behavior and activity, since women's behavior does not affect as much what men propose to do. By contrast, almost everything that men *do* will affect what women *have* to do, and thus women are

motivated to observe as keenly as they can whatever men do.

(2) Since any given cohort of men know they themselves did not create the system that gives them their advantages, they reject any charges that they conspired to dominate women.

(3) Since men, like other dominants or superordinates, take for granted the system that gives them their status, they are not aware of how much the social structure, from attitude patterns to laws, pervasively yields small, cumulative, and eventually large advantages in most competitions. As a consequence, they assume that their greater accomplishments are actually due to their inborn superiority.

(4) As a corollary to this male view, when men weigh their situation, they are more aware of the burdens and responsibilities they bear than of their unearned advantages.

(5) Superiors, and thus men, do not easily notice either the talents or the accomplishments of subordinates, and men have not in the past seen much wisdom in giving women more opportunities for growth, for women are not capable of much anyway, especially in the areas of men's special skills. Thus, in the past, few women have embarrassed men by becoming superior in those areas. When they did, their superiority was seen, and is often still seen, as an odd exception or to be ignored if possible. As a consequence, men see their superior position as a just one.

(6) Men view even small losses of deference, of advantages, or opportunities as large threats. Their own gains, or their maintenance of older advantages, are not noticed as much.⁷

Although the male view is similar to that of superordinates generally, one cannot simply equate the two. The structural position of males is different from that of superordinate groups, classes, ethnic populations, or castes. Males are, first of all, not a group but a social segment or a statistical aggregate within the society. They share much of a common destiny but they share few if any *group* or *collective* goals. Second, males share with their own women whatever gain or loss they

experience as members of high or low castes, ethnic groups, or classes. For example, women in a ruling stratum share with their men a high social rank, deference from the lower orders, and so on; while men in a lowly Indian caste share that rank with their women, too. In modern societies, men and women in the same family are on a more or less equal basis with respect to "inheritance, educational opportunity (at least, undergraduate), personal consumption of goods, most rights before the law, and the love and responsibility of their children"⁸—not fully equal, to be sure, but much more equal than are members of very different castes or social classes.

Moreover, from the male view, women also enjoy certain exemptions: ". . . freedom from military conscription, whole or partial exemption from certain kinds of heavy work, preferential courtesies of various kinds . . ." and so on. Indeed, men believe, on the whole, that their own lot is a more difficult one.⁹

Most important as a structural fact that prevents the male view from being simply that of a superordinate is that these superordinates, like their women, do not live in set-apart communities, neighborhoods, or families. There are, of course, other such categories that are not sequestered either, such as alcoholics, ex-mental patients, or the physically handicapped, but these are, as Goffman points out, "scattered somewhat haphazardly through the social structure." That is not so for men, who are, like their women, allocated to households in a nonrandom way, for "law and custom allow only one to a household, but strongly encourage the presence of that one."¹⁰

A consequence of this important structural arrangement is that both men and women are separated from their own sex kind by having a stake in the organization that gives each a set of different roles, or a different emphasis to similar roles; while women especially come to have a vested interest in the social unit that at the same time imposes inequalities on them. This coalition between the two individuals makes it difficult for members of the same sex to join with large numbers of persons of their

own sex, for purposes of defense or exploitation. This applies equally to men and women.

One neat consequence may be seen in the hundreds of family-law provisions created over the centuries that seem to run at cross purposes, some that gave more freedom to women in order to protect them from predatory or exploitative males—that is, in the male view, *other* men—and some that took freedom away from women and put it in the hands of supposedly good and kindly men—that is, heads of families, *themselves*. Or, in more recent times, the growing efforts of some fathers to press their daughters toward career competence, so that they will not be helpless when abandoned by their future husbands, against those same fathers' efforts to keep their daughters docile and dutiful toward their protecting fathers.

You will note that the male *views* are not contradictory in such instances, even though their *actions* may be. In coalition with their own women, they oppose the exploitative efforts of outside men; however, within the family unit itself, they see little need for such protections against themselves, for they are sure of their own good-heartedness and wisdom.

That men do see themselves as bound in a coalition with their families and thus with their daughters and wives is the cause of much common male resistance to the women's movement; the failure of many women to understand that male view has led to much misunderstanding.

To Our Contributors

- When sending manuscripts, please make sure that you do not send your only copy.
- And please also be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

—The Editors

Responses of Superordinates to Rebellion¹¹

FIRST, MEN HAVE BEEN SURPRISED at the outbreak of the women's movement. They simply had not known the depth of resentment that many women harbored—though of course many of those same women had not known it, either. Second, men are also hurt, for they feel betrayed. They discover, or begin to suspect, that the previously contented or pleasant facade their women had presented to them was false, and that they had been manipulated to believe in that presentation of self. Because males view themselves as giving protection against anyone exploiting or hurting their women, they respond with anger to the hostility they encounter, to the discovery that they were deceived, and to the charge that they have selfishly used the dominant position they feel they have rightfully earned.

A deeper, more complex source of male anger requires a few additional comments, for it relates to a central male role, that of jobholder and breadwinner. It is likely that most men, but especially most men outside the privileged stratum of professionals and managers, see their job as not yielding much intrinsic satisfaction, not being fun in itself; but they pride themselves on the hard work and personal sacrifice they are making as breadwinners. In the male view, men make a gift of all this to their wives and children.¹²

Now they are told that this was not a gift at all, and they have not earned any special deference for it. In fact, their wives earned what they received, and indeed nothing is owing. If work was a sacrifice, they are told, so were all the services, comforts, and self-deprivations that women provided. Whatever the justice of either claim, clearly if you thought you were giving or sacrificing much to make gifts to someone over a period of time, but you then learn he or she feels they were completely deserved, for the counter gifts are now asserted to have been as great and no gratitude or special debt was incurred, you are likely to be hurt or angry.¹³

I am reasonably certain about the processes I have just described. Let me go a step further

and speculate that the male resentment is the greater because many fathers had already come to suspect that their children, especially in adolescence, were indifferent to those sacrifices, as well as to the values that justified them.¹⁴ Thus, when women, too, begin to assert that men's gifts are not valued as much as the men thought, the worth of the male is further denied.

Some Areas of Change and Nonchange

ALTHOUGH I have not heard specific complaints about it, I believe that the most important change in men's position, as they experience it, is a loss of centrality, a decline in the extent to which they are the center of attention. In our time, other superordinates have also suffered this loss: colonial rulers, monarchs and nobles, and U.S. whites both Northern and Southern, to name a few.

Boys and grown men have always taken for granted that what they were doing was more important than what the other sex was doing, that where they were, the action was. Their women accepted that definition. Men occupied the center of the stage, and women's attention was focused on them. Although that position is at times perilous, since open to failure, it is also desirable.

Men are still there of course, and will be throughout our lifetime. Nevertheless, some changes are perceptible. The center of attention now shifts to women more than in the past. I believe that this shift troubles men far more, and creates more of their resistance, than the women's demand for equal opportunity and pay in employment.

The change is especially observable in informal relations, and men who are involved with women in the liberation movement experience it most often. Women find each other more interesting than in the past, and focus more on what other women are doing, for they are in fact doing more interesting things. Their work occupies more of their attention. Being without a man for a while does not seem to be quite so bereft a state as it once was. I also believe that this change affects men more now than at the time of the

Suffragette movement half a century ago, not only because more women now participate in it but also because men then had more solidarity, and could rely on more all-male organizations and clubs, while they are now more dependent on women for solace and intimacy.

As a side-issue, let me note that the loss of centrality has its counterpart among the vanguard of women, too, and its subtlety should be noted. Such women now reject a certain type of traditional centrality they used to experience, because its costs are too great. Most women know the experience of being the center of attention: When they enter a male group, conversation changes in tone and subject matter. They are likely to be the focus of comments, many of them pleasurable: affectionate teasing, compliments, warmth. However, those comments put women into a special mold, the stereotyped female. Their serious comments are not welcomed or applauded, or their ideas are treated as amusing. Their sexuality is emphasized. Now the vanguard women find that kind of centrality less pleasant, in fact, condescending, and they avoid it when they can. In turn, many men feel awkward in this new situation, for their old repertory of social graces is now called boorish.

Although I have noted men's feelings of hurt and anger, I want to emphasize that I believe no backlash of any consequence has been occurring, and no trend toward more reactionary male attitudes exists. Briefly, there is a continuing change of attitude on the part of both men and women, in favor of more equality, and the frequent expressions of male objection, sometimes labeled backlash in the popular press, can be attributed to two main sources: (1) the discovery, by some men who formerly did pay lip service to the principle of equality, that they do not approve of its concrete application; (2) active resistance by men and women who simply never approved of equality anyway, and are now opposing it openly because it can no longer be seen as a trivial threat.

It is not possible to summarize here all the various changes in public opinion about sex

roles, as attitudes have shifted over the past generation, simply because pollsters did not bother to record the data. They did not often aim at trying to find out about social trends, and thus only rarely asked the same questions in successive decades. One unfortunate result is that one of the most fiercely debated events of this period, the women's liberation movement, almost does not appear in the polls.¹⁵

The single finding that seems to be solid is that there are no data that show any backward or regressive trend in men's attitudes about women's progress toward equality. The most often repeated question is not a profound one, whether a respondent would vote for a qualified woman for President. Favorable answers rose from about one-fourth of the men in 1937 to two-thirds in 1971, and to four-fifths among men and women combined in 1975. Another repeated question is whether a married woman should work if she has a husband able to support her, and here the favorable answers of men and women combined rose from 18 percent in 1936 to 62 percent in 1975. By contrast to these large changes, a large majority favored equal pay, in principle at least, as early as 1942, and later data report no decrease.

In 1953, 21 percent of the men said it made no difference whether they worked for a man or woman, and that figure rose slightly to 32 percent in 1975.¹⁶ Polls in 1978 show that a large majority of the nation, among both men and women, was in favor of enforcement of laws forbidding job discrimination against women, or discrimination in education; and most agreed that more women should be elected to public office.¹⁷

A plurality of only about 40 percent had held such favorable opinions in 1970. On such issues, men and women do not differ by much—although until recently, men's attitudes were somewhat more favorable. Divisions of opinion are sharper along other lines: the young are in favor more than the old; the more educated are more in favor than the less educated; city dwellers more than rural people; blacks more than whites. Whatever the differences, however, clearly no

substantial amount of male backlash has appeared. Through men's eyes, at least the *principle* of equality seems more acceptable than in the past. Their resistance is not set against that abstract idea. Modest progress, to be sure, but progress nonetheless.

I cannot forgo making reference to a subvariety of the backlash, which has been reported in hundreds of articles, that is, that more men are impotent because of women's increased sexual assertiveness. This impotence, we are told, appears when women discover the delights of their own sexuality, make it clear to their men that they will play coy no more, and indeed look at their men as sexual objects, at least sometimes.

The widespread appearance of male impotence as an answer to, or an escape from, increased female willingness would certainly be news,¹⁸ but it violates the sexual view of most men, and—much worse—it also runs counter to the only large-scale data we have on the topic.¹⁹ The male view may be deduced, if you will permit the literary reference, from traditional pornography, which was written by men and expressed male fantasies. Briefly, in such stories but entirely contrary to real life, everything went smoothly: at every phase of interaction, where women in real male experience are usually indifferent if not hostile, the hero encounters enthusiasm, and in response he himself performs miracles of sexual athleticism and ecstasy.

Nothing so embroidered is found in social-science data, but it does seem reasonably certain that in a five-year period ending in 1970, the married men of the United States increased the frequency of their love-making with their wives. Doubtless, there were pockets of increased impotence, but with equal security we can assert that most husbands did not have that experience.

The reason is clear, I think: the message of permission had finally been received by women, and they put it into action. In millions of how-to-do-it books and articles, they were told not only to enjoy themselves but urged to do so by seducing their men. Since the most important sex organ is the human mind, these changes in the heads of both men and women

caused changes in the body. Without question, the simplest and most effective antidote to male impotence, or even lassitude and nonperformance, is female encouragement and welcome. The backlash of impotence has not, I think, been a widespread trend among males of our time, as a psychological response to women's move toward some equality in sexuality itself. To this change among women, men have offered little resistance.

Domestic Duties and Jobs

SO FAR, THE OPINION data give some small cause for optimism. Nevertheless, all announcements of the imminent arrival of utopias are premature. Men's approval of more equality for women has risen, but the record in two major areas of men's roles, the spheres of home and occupation, gives but little reason for optimism. Here, we can be brief, for though the voluminous data are very complex, the main conclusions can easily be summarized.²⁰ The striking fact is that very little has changed in either, if we consider the society as a whole, and focus on changes in behavior.

Let us consider the domestic role of men. They have contributed only slightly more time to their duties in the home than in the past—although “the past” is very short for time budgets of men's childcare and homemaking activities. By contrast, the best report now indicates that homemakers without jobs spend somewhat less time at their domestic tasks than they did ten years ago. Working wives do allocate much less time to the home than do non-jobholding wives, but *husbands* of working wives make up only a tiny part of the difference. We hear much these days about Russian husbands who expect their wives to hold jobs and also take care of housework and childcare; but so do U.S. husbands. Moreover, that is as true of the supposedly egalitarian Swedish or Finnish husbands, as it is of the German and French ones. (For U.S. husbands, about 6-11 hours per week.)

Of course, there are some differences. If a

child two years old or younger is in the house, the father does more. The better educated husbands do a bit more, and so do the younger husbands. But the massive fact is that men's domestic contribution does not change much, whether or not they work, and whether or not their wives work.²² Still more striking is the fact that until the end of this last decade there has been only little change in the percentage of women who want their husbands to take a larger share of the domestic work, though once again it is the vanguard of the young, the educated, the black, who exhibit the largest increases. Until recently, only about 20 to 25 percent of wives expressed the wish for more domestic participation by their husbands.²³

With reference to the second large area of men's roles, jobholding, we observe two further general principles of the relations between superordinates and those at lesser ranks. One is that men do not, in general, feel threatened by competition from women, if they believe the competition is fair and women do not have an inside track. Men still feel they are superior, and will do better if given the chance. Without actually trying the radical notion of genuinely fair competition, they have little reason to fear as yet: compared with women, they are better off in the 1970s than they were in the 1950s.

The second principle is that those who hold advantaged positions in the social structure (men in this case) can perceive or observe that they are being flooded by people they consider their inferiors—by women, blacks, or the lower classes—while the massive statistical fact is that only a few people are rising by much. There are several causes for this seeming paradox. One is that the new arrivals are so visible, so different from those who have held jobs up to this time. A second is our perception of relative numbers. Since there are far fewer positions at higher job levels, only a few new arrivals of a different type will constitute a fair-sized minority of the total at that level. Third, the mass media emphasize the hiring of women, in jobs that seem not to be traditional for them, for that is considered news. Men's structural position, then, causes

them to perceive radical change here, and they do resist it.

Nevertheless, the general conclusion does not change much. The amount of sex segregation in jobs is not much different from the past. More important, there is no decrease in the gap between the earnings of men and women; at every job level, it is not very different from the past, and in the period 1955-1971 the gap actually became somewhat larger.²⁴ That is, a higher percentage of women entered the labor force, and at better wages than in the past, but men rose somewhat faster than they.

Although the mass figures are correct, we need not discount all our daily observation. We see women entering formerly masculine jobs, from garbage-collecting to corporate management. This helps to undermine sex stereotypes, and thereby becomes a force against inequality. For example, women bus drivers were hardly to be found in 1940, but they now make up 37 percent of that occupation; women bartenders now form 32 percent of that occupation, but a generation ago they made up only 2.5 percent.²⁵

Although occupational segregation continued strong in the 1970s, in fact—in harmony with observations that most of us have made—it did decline in most of the professions in the decade between 1960 and 1970 (e.g., engineering, dentistry, science, law, medicine). That is, the percentage of women did rise.²⁶

Women now constitute about one-fourth of the student body in the higher ranking law schools of the country. In occupations where almost everyone was once male, it is not possible to recruit, train, and hire enough women to achieve equality in a few years, but the trend toward that seems clear enough.

Moreover, a secondary effect of these increasing numbers should be noted. Percentages are important, but absolute numbers are, too. If women lawyers increase from about 7,000 to 40,000, they become a much larger social force, even though they may still be only about 10 percent of the total occupation. When women medical students, even while remaining a small percentage of

their classes, increase in number so that they can form committees, petition administrators, or give solidarity to one another against the traditional masculine badgering and disesteem, they greatly increase their impact on discriminatory attitudes and behavior. That is, as the rise in numbers permits the formation of real groups, the power mounts faster than the numbers or even (except at the start) the percentages. Thus, changes do occur even where the percentage of the occupation made up of women is not yet large.

Bases of Present Changes

MOST LARGE-SCALE, objective measures of men's roles will show, I think, only little change over the past decade, but men do feel now and then that their position is in question and their security somewhat fragile. I believe they are right, for they sense a set of forces that lie deeper and are more powerful than the day-to-day negotiation and renegotiation of advantages among husbands and wives, fathers and children, or bosses and the people who work for them. They are troubled by this new situation.

The conditions we now live in are different from those of any prior civilization, and they give less support to men's claims of superiority than perhaps any other historical era. When these conditions weaken that support, men can rely only on previous tradition, or their attempts to socialize their children, to shore up their faltering advantages. Such rhetoric is not likely to be successful against the new objective conditions and the claims of aggrieved women. Thus, men are quite correct when they feel they are losing some of their privileges, even if many continue to laugh at the women's liberation movement.

The new conditions can be listed concretely, but I shall also give you a theoretical formulation of the process. Concretely, there are fewer tasks that require much strength, because of the increased use of various mechanical gadgets and devices. As to

those that still require strength, most men cannot do them, either. Women can now do more of the household tasks that men once felt only they could do, but still more are not done by husbands anyway but by repair specialists. With the development of modern warfare, there are few if any important combat activities that only men can do. Besides, women are much better educated than ever before.

With each passing year, psychological and sociological research reduces the areas in which men excel over women, and discloses far more overlap in talents, so that even when males still seem to have an advantage it is but a slight one. It is also becoming more widely understood that the top posts in government and business are not best filled by the stereotypical male, but by people, male or female, who are sensitive to others' needs, adept at obtaining cooperation, and skilled in social relations. Finally, in one sphere after another, the number of women who try to achieve rises, and so does the number who succeed.

Although the pressure of new laws has its direct effect on these conditions, the laws themselves arise from an awareness of the forces I have mentioned. Phrased in more theoretical terms, the underlying shift is toward the *decreasing marginal utility of males*, and this I suspect is the main source of men's resistance to women's liberation.

That is, fewer people continue to believe that what the male does is indispensable, nonsubstitutable, or adds such a special value to any endeavor that it justifies his extra "price" or reward. In wars of the past, for example, males enjoyed a very high value, because it was felt not only that they could do the job better than women, but they might well make the difference between being conquered and remaining free. In many societies, their marginal utility came from their contribution of animal protein through hunting. As revolutionary heroes, explorers, hunters, warriors, and daring capitalist entrepreneurs, they felt, and doubtless their women did too, that their contribution was beyond anything women could do, and it

earned many extra privileges of rank, authority, and creature services.

It is not then that, as individuals, males will be deemed less worthy in the future, or that their contributions will be less needed. It is rather that they will be seen as having no claims to *extra* rewards solely because they are members of the male-sex class. This is part of a still broader trend of our generation, which also increasingly denies that being white, or an upper-caste or upper-class person produces a marginally superior result, and thus justifies extra privileges.

The role relations of individuals are subject to continuous renegotiation, as people try to gain or keep some advantages, or to cast off some burdens. They fail or succeed in part because one or the other person has special resources or lacks that are unique to those individuals. Over the long run, however, the outcome of these negotiations depend on the deeper social forces we have been describing, social forces that ultimately determine which qualities or performances are thought to be more or less valued.

Now, men perceive that they may be losing some of their advantages, and that more aspects of their social roles are subject to public challenge and renegotiation than in the past. They resist these changes, and we can now suppose they will continue to do so. In all such changes, there are gains and losses.

Commonly, when people at somewhat lower social ranks gain freedom, those at higher ranks lose some of the burden of responsibility. It is also true that the care or help given by any dominant group in the past was never as much as its members believed they gave, and their loss in political power or economic rule never as great as they feared.

On the other hand, I know of no instance when a group or a social stratum gained its freedom, or moved toward more respect, and in the end its members decided they did not want it. Therefore, although men will not joyfully give up their rank, in spite of its burdens, neither will women decide that they would like to get back the older feminine privileges, accompanied with the lack of respect and material rewards that went with those courtesies.

I believe, then, that men perceive their roles as being under threat, in a world that is very different from any in the past. No society of which we know has yet come even close to equality between the sexes, but the modern social forces we have described here did not exist before, either. At the most cautious, we must concede that the conditions favoring a trend toward more equality are more favorable than at any earlier time in history. If we have little reason to conclude that equality is at hand, let us at least rejoice that we are now marching in the right direction. □

Notes

¹Herbert Goldberg, *The Hazards of Being Male* (New York: Nash, 1976); Patricia C. Sexton, *The Feminized Male: Classrooms, White Collars, and the Decline of Manliness* (New York: Random House, 1969).

On the recognition of disadvantages, see J. S. Chafetz, *Masculine/Feminine or Human?* (Itasca, Illinois: Peacock, 1974), pp. 56ff.

²Joseph H. Pleck, "The Psychology of Sex Roles: Traditional and New Views," in *Women and Men: Changing Roles, Relationship and Perceptions*, Libby A. Cater and Anne F. Scott, eds. (New York: Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, 1976), p. 182. Pleck has carried out the most extensive research on male roles, and I am indebted to him for special help in this inquiry.

³For these two quotations, see Sidney M. Jourad, "Some Lethal Aspects of the Male Role," p. 22, and Irving London, "Frigidity, Sensitivity and Sexual Roles," p. 42, in *Men and Masculinity*, Joseph H. Pleck and Jack Sawyer, eds. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974).

See also the summary of such traits, in I. K. Broverman *et al.*, "Sex-Role Stereotypes: A Current Appraisal," in *Women and Achievement*, Martha T. S. Mednick, S. S. Tangri, and Lois W. Hoffman, eds. (New York: Wiley, 1975), pp. 32-47.

⁴Feminists especially resent the narrowness of the feminine role in informal interaction, where they feel they are dealt with only as women, however this may be softened by personal warmth or affection.

⁵Robert Bierstedt's article, "The Sociology of the Majority," in Robert Bierstedt, *Power and Progress* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), pp. 199-220, does not state these principles, but I was led to them by thinking about his analysis.

⁶Robert K. Merton, in his "The Perspectives of Insiders and Outsiders," in his book *The Sociology of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 99-136, has analyzed this view in some detail.

⁷This general pattern is noted at various points in my

monograph *The Celebration of Heroes: Prestige as a Social Control System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

⁸Erving Goffman, "The Arrangement Between the Sexes," *Theory and Society*, 4 (1977), p. 307.

⁹Hazel Erskine, "The Polls: Women's Roles," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1971.

¹⁰Erving Goffman, "The Arrangement Between the Sexes," p. 308.

¹¹A simple version of these responses to rebellion is presented in William J. Goode, *Principles of Sociology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), pp. 359ff.

¹²See Joseph H. Pleck, "The Power of Men," in *Women and Men: The Consequences of Power*, Dana V. Hiller and R. Sheets, eds. (Cincinnati: Office of Women's Studies, University of Cincinnati, 1977), p. 20. See also Colin Bell and Howard Newby, "Husbands and Wives: The Dynamic of the Deferential Dialectic," in *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, Diana L. Barker and Sheila Allen, eds. (London: Longman, 1976), pp. 162-63; and see Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. 125.

On the satisfaction of work, see Daniel Yankelovich, "The Meaning of Work," in *The Worker and the Job*, Jerome Rosow, ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974), pp. 19-49.

¹³Whatever other sacrifices women want from men, until recently a large majority did *not* believe men should perform more housework or domestic care. On this matter, see Joseph H. Pleck, "Men's New Roles in the Family: Housework and Child Care," to appear in *Family and Sex Roles*, Constantina Safilios-Rothschild, ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979). Through the mid-1970s, only about one-fourth to one-fifth of wives agreed to such a proposal. But see Note²³.

¹⁴Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, p. 125.

¹⁵To date, the most complete published summary is that by Hazel Erskine, "The Polls: Women's Roles," pp. 275-91.

¹⁶Stephanie Greene, "Attitudes Toward Working Women Have 'A Long Way To Go,'" *Gallup Opinion Poll* (March 1976), p. 33.

¹⁷*Harris Survey*, Feb. 16, 1978; see also *Harris Survey*, Dec. 11, 1975.

¹⁸This is, however, in harmony with one view expressed by many women (as well as men), that men in the past were a bit necrophiliac, i.e., they preferred to hop on unresponsive women, take their quick crude pleasure, and hop off. It does not accord much with what we know of people generally (they have more pleasure when their partner does), or even of bawds and lechers (they brag about the delirium they arouse in the women they seduce).

¹⁹See Charles F. Westoff, "Coital Frequency and Contraception," *Family Planning Perspectives*, Summer 1974, pp. 136-41.

²⁰The most extensive time-budget data on a cross-national basis are found in *The Use of Time*, A. Szalai, ed. (The Hague: Mouton, 1972). The most useful summary of the data on the above points is in Joseph H. Pleck, "The Work-Family Role System," *Social Problems*, 24 (1977), pp. 417-27. See also his "Developmental Stages in Men's Lives: How Do They Differ From Women?" (National Guidance Association, Hartland, Michigan, 1977, mimeo).

²¹Elna Haavio-Mannila, "Convergences between East and West: Tradition and Modernity in Sex Roles in Sweden, Finland, and the Soviet Union," in *Women and Achievement*, Martha T. S. Midnick et al., eds. (New York: Wiley, 1975), pp. 71-84. Further data will appear in J. Robinson, *How Americans Use Time* (New York: Praeger, forthcoming).

²²Joseph H. Pleck, "Men's New Roles in the Family: Housework and Child Care," to appear in *Family and Sex Roles*, Constantina Safilios-Rothschild, ed. For details on men's contribution to child care, see Philip J. Stone, "Child Care in Twelve Countries," in *The Use of Time*, A. Szalai, ed.

²³These data come from J. Robinson, *How Americans Use Time*, and are to be found in Joseph H. Pleck, "Men's New Roles in the Family: Housework and Child Care." However, 1977 data show that in Detroit this figure has risen to over 60 percent: Arland Thornton and Deborah S. Freedman, "Changes in the Sex Role Attitude of Women. . . 1962-1977," *American Sociological Review*, 44 (October 1979), p. 833.

²⁴The expansion of women's jobs has occurred primarily in "female" jobs, or through new occupations defined as female; or (less frequently) by women taking over formerly male jobs. See Council of Economic Advisers, *Economic Report of the President*, 1973, p. 155; and Barbara R. Bergman and Irma Adelman, "The 1973 Report of the President's Council of Economic Advisers: The Economic Role of Women," *American Economic Review*, September 1973, pp. 510-11. In 1960, about 24 percent of the labor force was made up of women in occupations where women are predominant; in 1970, the figure was 27 percent according to Myra H. Strober, "Women and Men in the World of Work: Present and Future," in Libby A. Cater, A. F. Scott, and Wendy Martina, eds., *Women and Men: Changing Roles, Relationships and Perceptions* (New York: Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, 1976), pp. 128-33.

²⁵Jean Lipman-Blumen, "Implications for Family Structure of Changing Sex Roles," *Social Casework*, 57 (February 1976), pp. 67-79.

²⁶Victor R. Fuchs, "A Note on Sex Segregation in Professional Occupations," *Explorations in Economic Research*, 2 (Winter 1975), pp. 105-11. □

Kenneth Maxwell

The Communists and the Portuguese Revolution

The Portuguese revolution came at an inopportune moment for the superpowers. The height of the crisis in Portugal was sandwiched between the summits at Vladivostok (November 24, 1974) and at Helsinki (August 1, 1975), and while both East and West meddled in the internal affairs of Portugal, each was restrained by a mutual desire to protect more important bilateral arrangements. Nonetheless, the collapse of the dictatorship in 1974 and Portugal's inability to hold on to its African territories did mean that there were advantages to be gained, especially by the Soviet Union. The West was challenged in regions where its hegemony had been unquestioned for decades, and in consequence the response of Western governments throughout the crisis tended to be defensive.

On the other hand, the movement to the left in Portugal, which had seemed so categorical in 1975, failed to sustain itself. The key political element in this reversal had more to do with the internal dynamics of Portuguese politics and society than with any outside interference. The failure of the left to consolidate a broad base of support for the transformation of Portuguese society was caused preeminently by the bitter split that developed between the Socialists and Communists. Throughout the spring and summer of 1975, the two major parties of the left came to see each other as principal enemies. Whom to blame for the split is much debated, and it may have been inevitable, even desirable. The behavior of the Communists

was sufficiently ambivalent to alienate both the radical left and the democratic Socialists, forcing the former into a futile putsch in November 1975, and the latter into a de facto alliance with a reemergent right. This weakened and isolated the forces for radical change, and allowed the forces of moderation (or reaction, depending on one's point of view) to recuperate and consolidate power.

The beginning of the Portuguese crisis was deceptive in many ways. A revolution was not at all the intention of those who made the coup d'état of April 25, 1974; nevertheless, a revolution of sorts was what Portugal experienced. The old oligarchy was destroyed; massive state intervention in the economy became the norm; the great landed estates were expropriated; workers' pay and power increased dramatically; citizens were organized in neighborhood commissions, unions, and political parties, and could no longer be ignored either by the government or by private capitalists. The coup d'état thus brought about real changes, created real victims, challenged real assets. The problems that faced the new political leaders were not merely theoretical.

In most of the Western world, the political struggle was presented as something of a morality play. Our Moscow-oriented Communists entrenched in unions, the press, and the local administration—positions that they had seized in the confusion following the collapse of the Caetano regime—were portrayed as hell-bent on establishing a dictatorship of the left in alliance with radical military officers. There was something to this

picture—more than middle-aged intellectuals elsewhere in Europe were at first prepared to admit, and less than was hoped by young radicals who saw Portugal as the beginning of a European revolution. The threat was certainly sufficient to force middle-class Socialists into the streets of Lisbon and Oporto in defense of civil liberties, to mobilize the formidable influence of the Catholic Church, and to drive the peasantry of the northern provinces into violent protest. Yet, in truth the situation was much more complicated, especially in regard to the role of the Portuguese Communist party and of the armed forces. What in fact did happen in Portugal during these confusing years, and why? What does the behavior of the Portuguese Communist party demonstrate, if anything, about Communist strategies in contemporary Europe?

The first important fact about the Portuguese revolution is so obvious that its significance is often overlooked. It is that no mass movement brought the old regime down and that the participation of the clandestine political parties of the left was negligible. The dictatorship was toppled by the army, not by the Communists or anyone else. The coup of April 25, 1974 was carried out by a small group of junior officers, all of them influenced by their extensive experience in the colonial wars, most of them believing that the military should play a major role in the political process. The role of the Portuguese military, and of its many factions, was the central and unique element in the Portuguese situation. The multitudes that assembled in the streets of Lisbon and Oporto in the hours and weeks that followed the coup made the army's action irreversible. But popular mobilization followed the coup, it did not cause it.

Since the Portuguese military had long been regarded as among the most retrograde and reactionary in Europe, the political views of the MFA—the Armed Forces Movement (Movimento das Forças Armadas) were a considerable surprise to most observers, as indeed was the coup itself. The MFA was

known to have originated in response to professional grievances and concerns with status and privilege. Western observers, therefore, tended to see the movement as basically conservative. But the problem was only in part that of a coterie of captains angry about the low rates of promotion and pay, and low esteem. Dissent within the officer corps was a reflection of a much deeper malaise that grew out of the scale, composition, and organization of the Portuguese armed forces, all of which in turn was a consequence of the seemingly endless military commitment in Africa. In 1974 out of a population of a little over 8 million, one in four men of military age was in the armed forces. The Army alone contained at least 170,000 men, of which 135,000 were in Africa. The Air Force had 16,000, the Navy 18,000, the units of the Republican Guard (GNR) 10,000, and the paramilitary security police (PSP) 15,000. The armed forces represented (at a low estimate) a proportion of 30.83 per 1,000 of the population, exceeded only by Israel (40.09) and North and South Vietnam (31.66 and 55.36); it was five times that of the U.K., and three times that of the U.S. or Spain. The military budget represented at least 7 percent of the GNP, more than that of the U.S. With a per capita income of just over \$1,000, Portugal spent a minimum of \$63.27, per capita on military expenditure, and this despite abysmal pay for officers and, after deductions for uniforms, food, and other services, token or nonexistent pay for the troops. It was an army with almost no totally professional units. Its private soldiers were for the most part illiterate, badly trained, and at times tenuously disciplined.

The officer corps was composed of (1) an aged group of generals; (2) a segregated elite of staff officers, recruited from the upper classes of Portuguese society, exclusively devoted to administration and relieved of combat duty; (3) a diminished cohort of junior and middle-rank officers, men in their thirties and early forties, who had spent most of their professional lives overseas.

The bitter antagonism of the junior officers in the field toward their superiors was

aggravated by class friction. Since the fighting had begun in Angola, there had been a rapid falloff in the number of applicants to the officers' academy and, as a result, a chronic shortage of personnel in the middle ranks. In response, the government shifted its recruitment policies, providing free tuition and a salary to cadets and even admitting conscripted officers (*milicianos*), to bestow status, to the academy. By the mid-'70s, this had produced a marked social cleavage within the professional officer corps at the rank of lieutenant colonel, and an extraordinary tangle of jealousy and dissension.

Initially the MFA was composed exclusively of captains and majors of the professional staff. Although some of these had been *milicianos*, the MFA did not include those younger men in their twenties who were still *milicianos*. Later, some trusted senior officers were incorporated or more often kept informed of developments. Thus the MFA was a small compact group with strong personal interrelationships, numbering less than 200 officers out of a middle-rank corps of some 1,600. Members were spread out in most units. The MFA was especially strong in Guiné and Mozambique. After December 1, 1973, the organization was cemented together at the center by a 15-man coordinating committee that was subdivided into a military committee, charged with the detailed planning of the uprising, and a political committee, which formulated the program for the post-coup situation.

For a determined minority within the army, a protest that originated in professional concerns provided a cover for political objectives. Major Melo Antunes, an artillery officer with a long record of opposition to the regime, who had at first dismissed the captains' protest movement as being "a reactionary cooperative in defense of privilege," was to play a key role in drawing up the MFA program. Colonel Vasco Gonçalves, another member of the political committee, had been involved in a putschist attempt a decade earlier, and his actions on that occasion had closely paralleled those of the Communist party. Mozambique-born

Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, the leader of the military planning group, was much influenced by the theories of guerrilla struggle in Guiné where he had worked in psychological warfare. The movement as a whole, however, consisted of men with divergent political views. Their coalescence was the result less of any uniform conspiratorial objective than of a convergence of resentments, loss of a sense of purpose, and emotional and intellectual estrangement resulting from the long colonial wars. Despite conventional wisdom, the work of the young officers had to be liberalizing and liberating. The intransigence of the Portuguese regime and its commitment to the wars made that inevitable.

The Portuguese Communist party was III
founded in 1921. Originally, the Communists had little representation among the working class, which, until the 1930s, was strongly influenced by anarcho-syndicalism. But after 1941, under the leadership of Alvaro Cunhal, the party began to develop a political base. Forced underground since the first days of the Salazar dictatorship, the long decades of clandestine existence profoundly affected the Portuguese Communists' psyche and behavior. The PCP always bore the brunt of this repression. Cunhal himself spent 13 years behind bars in Portugal, and another 14 years in exile in Eastern Europe and Moscow. The party was particularly sensitive to developments in Prague, because its activities had been directed from Czechoslovakia since the 1940s. After Fidel Castro, Cunhal was the first Communist leader to approve the 1968 Soviet intervention in Prague, strongly diverging thereafter from his Iberian counterpart Santiago Carrillo in Spain.

In Portugal the PCP possessed a strong base in the Alentejo, the grain-producing lands south of the Tagus River—a region of great landed estates. Here the party was strongly implanted among the anticlerical, landless rural laborers. The Alentejo is a region with a long history of Communist militancy, and Cunhal knows it well. He is the

author of one of the few detailed analyses of the social and economic structures of the Portuguese countryside, *A questão agrária em Portugal*—"The Agrarian Question in Portugal" (published in Brazil in 1968). In the constituent election after the coup, the PCP received its largest shares of the vote in the Alentejan districts of Beja, Evora, and Setúbal: 39.0 percent, 37.1 percent, and 37.8 percent respectively.

The PCP was also strong within the labor movement. After the incapacitation of Salazar in 1968 and during the early years of Marcello Caetano, Salazar's successor, liberalization of the rules governing election to positions within the corporative syndicate structure allowed Communists to take a leading role in union committees. In 1970 the Communist-influenced unions joined Inter-sindical, a coordinating organization. Prior to the coup the Communists were strongly entrenched in the metallurgical unions and increasingly influential among lower-middle-class white-collar workers, especially the bank workers' unions in Lisbon and Oporto.

In early 1974 there were probably not more than 2,000 members of the party inside Portugal (130 cells according to one account), and it is not clear how much of the clandestine organization emerged at that time. There was, however, a rapid expansion following legalization, and by 1976 the PCP claimed a membership of over 100,000.

With a solid core of support in the unions and in the rural south, the party's strategy called for alliances with the owners of small and medium-sized businesses. Cunhal had first called for such alliances in 1965; the strategy gained added significance after 1973 when the mobilization of these same small social groups against the Popular Unity government of President Salvador Allende in Chile proved a critical element in his downfall.

An important and vocal segment of the Portuguese left, however, opposed all such alliances. If the Communists tended to disparage the Socialists and Social Democrats, they took much more seriously the challenge to their predominance from

several ultraleftist groups that emerged in the early 1970s. Since the Twentieth Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union in 1956, the debates and divergences within the international Communist movement had been reflected in Portugal. In 1970 this gave rise to a Marxist-Leninist left that regarded the PCP as "revisionist" and either looked back nostalgically to Stalin or turned to Mao for inspiration. While small in numbers and fragmented into numerous competing factions, these groups were to exercise considerable influence before and after the coup, especially in student and later in some union and military circles.

In the first months after the coup d'état, the Portuguese Communists placed themselves firmly in the center of the political spectrum. As a member of the first Provisional Government, Cunhal followed a line of studied moderation. The Communists' minister of labor resisted workers' demands and ensured that the minimum wage was as low as possible. At the Communist party's October 1974 congress, the PCP went so far as to drop the phrase "the dictatorship of the proletariat" from their manifesto, the first Western European Communist party to do so. And the Communists remained as sensitive as ever to criticism (which was not slow in coming) from those Cunhal called "pseudo-revolutionary leftists" and "petty-bourgeois radicals."

But, like most things in Portugal during those cyclone months, appearances were deceptive. The "centrist" position of the Communists had a totally different content from that espoused by General Spínola, the provisional president. As the fundamental divergences between Spínola and the PCP over the direction of domestic and colonial policy became more apparent, it brought into closer collaboration the PCP and those members of the MFA who were also opposed to Spínola's attitudes toward decolonization.

For each it was a tactical alliance. The young officers were after all the epitome of the "petty-bourgeois radicals," the group that Cunhal had spent so much of his time denouncing, and the Communists were

appreciated more for their apparent willingness to follow the MFA's leadership and for their discipline and reliability than for their long-term vision of the future of Portuguese society. What united them was the fact that they shared enemies, not that they agreed in principle on the same objectives.

At base Cunhal's rationale for his alliance had less to do with the social dynamics of Portugal than with the "lessons" of Chile. He was determined to avoid another "Chilean situation," and the emergence of a radical element within the military offered the possibility of forging alliances that might neutralize one of the potential sources of a reactionary comeback. The alliance with the MFA became a fundamental pillar of Cunhal's strength.

But as alliances were being forged on one front, alliances were disintegrating on another. Communist actions were alienating powerful elements of the Portuguese left that had previously collaborated with the Communists in the anti-Fascist struggle. Most especially and dramatically, the Communists were alienating the rapidly expanding Socialists under the leadership of Mario Soares.

When Mario Soares returned from Paris and Alvaro Cunhal from Prague in April 1974, they posed together smiling, holding between them a red carnation. But in January 1975, when the Communists took to the streets in massive demonstrations to support union legislation that would effectively perpetuate their bureaucratic control over the organized working class, the split between the two movements became visible to all. The MFA politburo, then known as the Committee of Twenty, publicly endorsed the Communists' position. But the Catholic Church, breaking its long political silence, condemned the proposal for a centralized union structure and called for political pluralism. The Socialists and Popular Democrats (now called the Social Democrats) in the cabinet succeeded in amending the details of the legislation in such a manner as to

guarantee free elections for local union officials and committees. The Socialists feared that the proposed centralized union structure would block the major inroads they were making among traditionally Communist workers who were disenchanted with the PCP's ambivalent attitude toward wage claims and labor militancy during the first year of the revolution. The sharpening ideological debate thus reflected a growing struggle to control vital bureaucratic machinery, growing regional polarization, and escalating class and personal antagonisms.

The public dispute between the Communists and the Socialists that developed in January had been in the works for some time, and it paralleled, and to some extent intersected with, major divergences within the military. The showdown that pushed Spínola out of the presidency had highlighted the power that the PCP and the MFA could exercise when acting together. On September 28, 1974, when the crisis broke, the Communist party had moved efficiently and effectively to organize a blockade of Lisbon, thus preventing the thousands expected for a demonstration in support of General Spínola from assembling. The civilian pickets and barricades had been established with the connivance and support of COPCON (the Operational Command for the Continent, organized July 8, 1974), which functioned as the MFA's own command structure under Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho and circumvented the traditional military hierarchy and the politically "unreliable" elements still ensconced within it. In March 1975, COPCON once again coordinated the defense of the revolution. And again, civilian vigilantes mobilized. Both occasions were used to weed out and incarcerate purported enemies, including, to be sure, major figures of the old regime and the financial and industrial oligarchy, but also (in March) several military officers who from the beginning had been leading members of the MFA. The groups of soldiers and armed civilians who conducted the roundups often carried blank arrest warrants issued by

COPCON headquarters. By April 1975, one year after the coup had opened the doors of the dictatorship's jails, there were more political prisoners than there had been on the eve of Caetano's downfall.

As early as September 1974, therefore, and most especially after March 1975, it was clear that whatever the army may have wished or the leaders of the MFA may have intended, the intrusion of political and party divisions into the military was unavoidable. With the right and center effectively neutralized, the struggle for power began in earnest within the left and inside the MFA.

With the backing of the Communists in March 1975, the MFA assembly imposed a series of far-reaching measures, the most critical of them the nationalization of the banks and insurance companies. Because of the close interlocking of the Portuguese oligarchy and its control of major sectors of the economy, the nationalization of the banks gave the state control of the major part of privately owned industry. Since the banks also owned or held mortgages on virtually every Portuguese newspaper, the state now also assumed financial control of much of the communications media: all the Lisbon morning dailies, two Oporto morning dailies, three of the four Lisbon evening dailies, and a group of weekly magazines and newspapers.

At the time of the bank nationalizations, the revolutionary council also made plain that it would soon promulgate a major expropriation, probably of all estates over 500 hectares, a measure that would destroy the base of the great *latifundiarios* of the south. The nationalizations and the expropriations of the *latifundiarios* struck at the two principal bases of the old regime and placed Portugal immediately among the most radical of European states, few of which dared touch the banks or engage in large-scale land expropriation without a clear commitment to compensation.

At the same time, the military radicals pushed forward a major restructuring of the military establishment itself. The MFA assembly was expanded to 240, representing the three services and incorporating for the

first time sergeants and enlisted men in addition to regular officers (sergeants and enlisted men had already participated in organs of the MFA in Africa). The sergeants and enlisted men were in the minority, but the principle of representation was extended to the three service assemblies and to the committees that emerged at unit levels in barracks throughout the country.

The most public move of the revolutionary council was to oblige the political parties to sign a pact with the MFA (April 11, 1975); this pact assured military supremacy for at least three years, relegated the provisional government to a subordinate position in the new hierarchy of power, and gave to the MFA assembly a coequal voice with any future national assembly in the election of a president. The political parties, if they were not to jeopardize the Constituent Assembly elections scheduled for April 25, 1975, felt they had no choice but to acquiesce.

The pact between the MFA and the political parties, as it turned out, was not as one-sided as it originally appeared. The critical point was that the elections scheduled for April 1975, the first anniversary of the coup, would in fact be held. That in itself was a major point of victory for the civilian political parties and one that the military radicals afterward regretted having conceded. The radicals should have recognized that, whatever the result of the poll, it was bound to represent a potential challenge to military supremacy. For the first time since the April coup, there would exist an alternate source of legitimacy.

A timetable for Constituent Assembly elections and national parliamentary elections had been an integral part of the original MFA program, and to abandon them would have been an affront to the Portuguese people, who after 50 years of manipulated electoral contests and a narrow franchise were eager to participate. But leading officers did little to disguise their contempt for "bourgeois" electoral politics. Lieutenant Ramiro Correia, a naval officer who had

become a leading figure in the general staff's Fifth Division, likened the contest to a "football pool." Now Admiral Rosa Coutinho, former high commissioner in Angola and in 1975 the executive officer of the Revolutionary Council, attempted to persuade people to cast blank ballots. Coutinho hoped that, should such appeals be successful, the result might be used as an argument to support a political role for the MFA that would allow it to dispense with civilian political parties altogether. This tactic was based on opinion polls commissioned by the MFA that showed as much as 50 percent of the electorate undecided on whom they would support. Ironically, much of the foreign press, obsessed with the power of the Communists, also dismissed the elections as being of minor significance.

They all were wrong. The elections were of enormous significance, and this was well recognized once the results were in. In one of the highest turnouts ever recorded in a national election (91.7 percent), the Portuguese Socialist party led by Mario Soares took 37.9 percent of the vote; the Popular Democrats (now called the Social Democrats), 26.4 percent; Alvaro Cunhal's Communists a mere 12.5 percent nationwide; the PCP's sister party, the Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP/CDS), a mere 4.1 percent; the right-wing Social Democratic Center (CDS), 7.6 percent. Blank votes numbered no more than 7.0 percent of the total.

The election returns also revealed a marked regional polarization. Communist support was almost exclusively concentrated in the south of the country, especially in the industrial towns along the south bank of the Tagus estuary opposite Lisbon, and in the Alentejo. In the north, the Popular Democrats and the Social Democratic Center dominated the returns.

The unintended consequence of the elections was to point up the profound differences in social and economic organization between the north and south of Portugal. In the north, the size of the average farm holding is a little over 2 hectares (1

hectare equals 2.47 acres), but landownership is almost universal. The influence of the Catholic Church is strong and religiosity fervent. Attachment to tradition and family and a strong suspicion of innovation are general. Agriculture is intensive and diverse. Rainfall is abundant and there is access to ancient irrigation systems. In the south, on the plains and low plateau of the Alentejo, agriculture is monocultural (cereals, olives), and land ownership highly concentrated (the average size of a farm in the south is almost 40 hectares). A large percentage of the labor force is composed of farm workers, most in precarious seasonal employment. The climate is Mediterranean, with long, hot, dry summers. The influence of the Church is negligible, often nonexistent. Among the landless laborers, class consciousness is strong. Here was the backbone of the clandestine PCP, and it was from the Alentejo that the PCP, as soon as it emerged as a legal party in 1974, chose its folk heroes and official martyrs.

The Socialists (PS) emerged as a national party, with respectable percentages in both north and south. It was in the central regions of the country and the major urban centers that the Socialists did best of all. In Lisbon they won 46.1 percent of the vote; in Oporto, 42.5 percent; in Coimbra, 43.3 percent; and in Santarém, 42.9 percent. This reflected an important social phenomenon.

The Socialists were the first choice in the more modern, open area of Portugal. In the coastal plain between the two major cities of Oporto and Lisbon, and up the river valley to Coimbra and Santarém, their support was concentrated in regions with good communications that tended to be at least partly industrialized. Of course, the industrial coastal strip merged into the more clearly defined regions to the north and south. Few nonagricultural workers in the north, for example, do not also have some access to land, and the factories in the region north of Oporto, up toward Braga, are often small paternalistic enterprises. Unlike in the north, where most of those who leave the land do so to go abroad to the factories of France or

Germany, in the South migration tends to be internal; hence, strong Alentejan influences extend into the industrial towns of the Lisbon-Setúbal area.

In fact, there were important similarities between the regions of Popular Democratic and Communist strength. The districts of Bragança and Vila Real in the north, along with those of Beja and Evora in the south, suffered the highest rates of infant mortality. All had the highest percentage of the work force engaged in agriculture (over 70 percent). Each district had a high illiteracy rate (over 40 percent). All were backward and in many respects isolated rural communities, each in its own way a highly traditional society. But in two critical respects they diverged: in religion and land ownership. And these two were the fundamental issues in the struggle that was about to begin.

Thus the coincidence between the seizure of power by the radical military and their Communist backers in March and the holding of the elections in April, with their victory for moderation, was of very great importance. The election returns demonstrated graphically that the base of support for the revolution was narrow indeed. The returns provided inadvertently a geography for counterrevolution, a geography of which the Communists' enemies inside and outside of Portugal were soon to take advantage.

Over the next eight months the fate of the revolution was settled. Despite the left's apparently formidable assets in March 1975—control of the administration, unions, army, the media, and the political initiative—by the end of November 1975 the left was disunited, weakened, on the defensive, with its power broken. Why?

- First, the all-important alliance with the military radicals failed. The MFA leadership split into various factions, all ostensibly "on the left" but each with a different view of tactics and objectives. Simultaneously, discipline collapsed, and more quickly among the "leftist" units than among the centrist or rightist units.

- Second, the decolonization process that had helped cement the MFA's internal solidarity became, after March 1975, a major irritant and divider as the situation in Angola proved increasingly intractable and as outsiders intervened there at will. Moreover, several hundred thousand angry refugees poured into Portugal from Africa throughout the summer.

- Third, the economic situation in Portugal became increasingly precarious and this allowed outsiders leverage they had lacked before. Western governments over the summer of 1975 made it very clear to Lisbon that economic assistance would be dependent on political good behavior.

- Fourth, and perhaps most significant, the Communists made several major blunders. They misread the balance of forces within Portugal and hence the power of their enemies. They misunderstood the psychological impact of some of their actions, throwing some of their potential allies into the arms of their opponents.

- Finally (though it is difficult to prove it), the Portuguese Communists grossly overestimated the support they could count on from the Soviet Union.

The tactical problems facing the PCP leadership in the spring and summer of 1975 were considerable. They did face a new situation after March, one that to every appearance had "revolutionary potential." Their policies had until that moment been based on defeating the great landowners and the monopolists. But by mid-1975 both of these "enemies" had been put to flight. In the Alentejo some 1.2 million hectares had been expropriated, often through the initiative of the workers themselves, and sometimes by default, as workers carried on in the place of absentee owners. In any event, land seizure occurred on a massive scale and with minimal resistance. The nationalizations of industry also proceeded with ease, and again the PCP followed up as much as initiated these moves. Now, with the power of the monopolies and *latifundiarios* destroyed, the editors of Cunhal's 1974 book *For a Democratic and*

National Revolution, when revising the work in July 1975, suggested that “the present historical stage of the revolution seems to be more correctly defined as a superior stage [than the title of Cunhal’s book implied], that of socialist revolution.”

The difficulty with this “new stage” was that it inevitably showed up the ambivalent attitude of the Communists toward their would-be allies, the small and middle-level farmers of the central and northern regions and the small shopkeepers and property owners in the towns. Indeed, Cunhal had already made it clear that

the allies of the proletariat for the socialist revolution are not the same as those for the democratic and national revolution. In the first the proletariat carries out the fundamental attack on the monopolies and *latifundiários* allied with the part of the bourgeoisie (the petty bourgeoisie and parts of the middle class) interested in the antimonomopolistic fight.

The socialist revolution [he continued] is directed against the bourgeoisie in its totality and for this reason, some of the allies of the proletariat in the first stage (sectors of the urban middle class, sectors of the rural peasantry, and some elements of the *petit bourgeoisie*) cease to be allies during the socialist revolution. [Cunhal, *Radicalismo Pequeno Burgês da Façada Socialista*. Lisbon: Edições Avante. Second Edition, 1974, p. 82. My translation.]

Cunhal indeed was blunt.

The would-be victims, however, had a keen sense of their vulnerability. The land seizures in the south, and some highly publicized seizures elsewhere in the country, had thoroughly alarmed the peasantry and scared them into mutual collaboration. Indeed, the owners of small and medium property proved much more formidable opponents than the great landowners and industrialists had been. Cunhal himself was to note a year later that there had been “without doubt deficiencies and errors” in the party’s activities over these months, preeminently in “underestimating the importance of these classes.” He spoke by then from bitter experience, for it was precisely the small landowners who mobilized in August 1975 to burn and sack at least 48 of

the party’s offices in central and northern Portugal, virtually expelling the party from these regions, and making it clear that it was in their power to cut off Lisbon from the whole north and center of the country if they chose to do so.

The psychological errors committed by the Communists only hastened this polarization. Their attack on the newspaper *República* became an international cause célèbre, and the attempt to monopolize the mass media proved to be entirely counterproductive for the Communists. *República* had a long and honorable record of anti-Fascism; it had been sustained through times of great adversity by 3,500 small shareholders; and it was edited by a well-known anti-Fascist and Socialist, Raul Rego. No damage that *República* could have done to the Communists had it been allowed to continue could have matched the damage done to the Communists by this manner of its suppression. The attack and take-over of the Catholic Church’s radio station in Lisbon also had major negative repercussions, especially among the highly religious peasantry of the north. And as if to confirm the image of Stalinist high-handedness, Cunhal gave his famous interview to Oriana Fallaci. “If you believe that the Constituent Assembly will be transformed into a parliament, you are very much mistaken,” he said. “In Portugal there will be no parliament.”

The PCP also overestimated the tenacity of their friends and underestimated that of their enemies. In the civilian sphere the Socialists showed a much greater capacity to mobilize, even to take to the streets, than the Communists had anticipated, and Mario Soares was tougher than even his friends expected. The Communists, as Cunhal recognized later, also “badly evaluated the situation in the armed forces and were overoptimistic as to the outcome of the internal conflicts within the military.” The groups associated with Prime Minister Colonel Vasco Gonçalves became increasingly isolated as the summer wore on. Close to the PCP, the Gonçalvesists had established formidable bases of power. They dominated the office of the Prime Minister

and the Fifth Division of the General Staff, the coordinating agency for propaganda and indoctrination that was responsible for the “cultural dynamization” program both within the armed forces and on the civilian level throughout the country. The Ministry of “Social Communication,” like the Labor Ministry, also was run by military men close to the PCP. After March the Gonçalves dominated the commission that had been established to dismantle the secret police, a key position because of the access it afforded to the voluminous files. Now, under the supervision of Commander Almada Contreiras, a new intelligence and counter-intelligence agency was established and it, too, under Gonçalves control.

But, by mid-summer, the initiative within the military had passed to a second group of the left within the MFA. This faction, associated with the name of Major Melo Antunes, saw the armed forces as an essential instrument in the revolutionary process, but its members increasingly objected to the vanguard role usurped by the Gonçalves. They believed that a broader base of social support than that provided by the PCP was essential if the MFA was not to be placed in opposition to the majority of the population. Collaboration with the political parties was necessary in their view if an orderly and peaceful transition to socialism was to be achieved. Melo Antunes, a Gramscian Marxist, was the main political figure in this group, but it was a broad group that had important operational support in the central and southern military regions, where the two commanders Colonel Pezerant and Colonel Charais, both early members of the MFA, were close to Antunes.

To the left of both Melo Antunes and the PCP-influenced Gonçalves stood a populist radical group with fuzzy ideological views but with some military support. It was associated with Otelo de Carvalho and dominated the command structure of COPCON and several of the key regiments in the Lisbon area, especially the light artillery and the military police. These military populists were opposed to all political parties, the PCP included, and

so stood for a vaguely defined “people’s power.” But the power of the populists was undermined by the indiscipline that populism brought with it. COPCON was no more than a coordinating agency and the growth of political passions at unit level tended to undermine its effectiveness, so that the troops under its nominal command dissolved into their component parts. The most radical units tended to become the most chaotic, and Communist attempts to subvert the more disciplined units, especially the commandos, failed miserably when the tough and popular commando colonel won over his troops in the consequent showdown. In fact it was a fourth group in the army, little noticed at the time, that was most active behind the scenes as the summer drew to a close. Known at times as the “operationals,” this fourth group was composed of officers who reflected the professional interests of the officer corps, which had, of course, been a powerful element in the original captains’ movement. A leading figure in this group was Colonel Ramalho Eanes, the future president of Portugal.

There were several factors beyond the PCP’s control that help explain the Communists’ behavior in this critical period.

- From a rump clandestine organization with most of its leadership living abroad, the party had expanded by the summer of 1975 to over 100,000 members. Few of these newcomers had received the ideological indoctrination or long experience with party organizations that would have made them a reliable and disciplined force. Many of the rank and file were to the left of the party leadership, and tensions emerged between “new” and “old” Communists. The new Communists were also, according to Cunhal’s own retrospective criticism, highly sectarian, intolerant, and indiscrete. The rapidly moving political situation in Portugal thus caught the PCP in a state of mutation: no longer the sleek clandestine organization it had been but not yet a mass party.

- Second, the noisy factions of the far left were in a high state of mobilization during these months, constantly demonstrating in

the streets, and making converts among workers and in the military. The PCP was sensitive to criticism from its left flank and fearful of being out-manuevered by the leftists. Events—as with the nationalization of the banks, the land seizures, the take-over of *República* and Lisbon's Catholic radio station—often moved faster under grass-roots pressure than the central committee of the PCP might have wished. Cunhal was right in believing that the staying power of the far leftist factions was limited; yet, toward the end of the summer, despite Cunhal's constant criticism of these “verbalists,” the PCP entered into a “revolutionary front” with them and was so linked when the November showdown took place.

- The demands that “internationalist” solidarity placed on the Portuguese Communists may explain this misalliance. It is impossible to speak here with certainty. But there can be no doubt now that as early as August 1975 Cunhal was privately urging caution upon the central committee of the PCP. Yet, in October he led the PCP into its reckless front with the previously despised far left factionalists, an action that further alienated many Portuguese and helped consolidate a very broad-based coalition of forces against the Communists. The PCP, however, has never hidden its belief that the Soviet Union is the “sun,” to use Cunhal's word, of the Communist movement. And it is at least worth noting that the behavior of the PCP between August and November 1975 provided a very convenient smokescreen that did much to cover the beginning of large-scale Soviet and Cuban intervention in Angola. The Communists, of course, abandoned their new “allies” when the confrontation occurred in November.

During these months the center and the democratic right acted with great skill and restraint, far beyond what the Communists might have expected from the past and continuing high jinks of the now exiled General Spínola. As far as one can tell, the anti-Communist military in Portugal was scrupulous in keeping a distance between

themselves and those who were nostalgic for a return to the old regime. Moreover, on several occasions large-scale violence might have discredited and split the anti-Communist alliance now forming between Socialists, non-Communist leftists, moderates in the military, and civilian and Church leaders in central and northern Portugal. Yet, caution and restraint prevailed. The most dangerous moment perhaps occurred when large numbers of Alentejan workers besieged the Constituent Assembly and members of the government in the National Assembly Building in Lisbon. The commandos wanted to go in and clear out the crowd. But they were held back by (then) President General Costa Gomes who, despite his own very equivocal behavior during this period, was not prepared to see Portugal plunged into civil war. The caution of the non-Communist military leaders and their defensive strategy paid off; when officerless radical soldiers of the paratrooper corps led a “Left” uprising, the anti-Communist alliance under the command of Colonel Eanes was able to crush it decisively on November 25, 1975.

Finally, it must be noted that the confused situation in the country allowed for effective action by *agents provocateurs*. Very little has yet appeared about this aspect of the Portuguese situation that can be relied on, but there can be little doubt that foreign intelligence operatives from the NATO countries were very active in Portugal between June and November 1975. The sudden emergence (and just as sudden disappearance) of a “revolutionary” movement (SUV) within the military ranks in this period, for instance, is remarkably similar in its tone and impact to the sergeants' “movement” in Brazil in 1964, which helped precipitate the coup of that year by conservative generals and politicians. In Portugal, as might have been anticipated, this development had a similarly sobering affect on the Portuguese officer corps—even upon the leftists within it. It is perhaps only accidental that the two leading officials in the U.S. embassy at this time, Ambassador Frank Carlucci and Deputy Chief of Mission

Herbert Okum, were both "old Brazil hands."

In any event, it was the isolation of the PCP in the northern and central countryside, together with the isolation of the Gonçalves within the military, that facilitated the formation of a temporary alliance among the anti-Communist forces after August 1975. This alliance during the November 25, 1975 showdown delivered the decisive coup de grâce to the dream of "socialist revolution" so avidly espoused a few months before by Alvaro Cunhal and his allies.

After the November 1975 countercoup, the revolutionary moment had passed. The restrictions forced upon the political parties during the height of the radical military's influence were undone and a constitutional regime was established. Despite the strong socialist orientation in the wording of the constitution, the regime that was instituted in 1976 did not substantially differ from the Western mainstream.

The first constitutional government was formed under the leadership of Mario Soares, whose Socialist party had retained its plurality in the April '76 national elections. In June '76 General Ramalho Eanes, the military mastermind of the November 25 coup, was elected president of the Republic by an overwhelming majority; but government by political party proved rocky indeed.

By 1978, the Socialist attempt to go it alone as a minority government, seeking parliamentary support on individual issues from both left and right, had failed. The second constitutional government, a coalition between the Socialists and the conservative CDS party, fell apart over the issue of land reform. Thereafter, President Eanes turned away from the political parties and twice formed governments that were led by technocrats; both proved incapable of attracting sufficient parliamentary support. The President then was forced to install a caretaker government and to call elections for December 2, 1979.

The results of that recent election gave a small parliamentary majority to the Democratic Alliance—a coalition of the

Social Democratic party (led by Francisco Sá Carneiro), the CDS (led by Freitas do Amaral), the small Popular Monarchist party, and the "Reformers," a group of former Socialist ministers. The heavy losers of the '79 parliamentary elections were the Socialists and Mario Soares. The Socialists, who had received 37.9 percent of the votes in 1975 and 35.0 percent in 1976, now could muster only 27.6 percent at the end of 1979. In the municipal elections, held on December 16, 1979, the Socialist defeat was even greater, and the party lost control of Portugal's two principal cities—Lisbon and Oporto.

During the period 1976-78, despite the experiences of '75, the PCP retained a strong hold on its faithful. In the April '76 National Assembly elections, the party gained 14.6 percent of the vote. The lowest Communist turnout occurred in the presidential election of '76, when the Communist candidate received only 365,371 votes and 7.2 percent of the total cast—many Communist sympathizers defecting to the cause of the military populist Otelo de Carvalho who received 796,392 votes and 16.5 percent of the total. Nevertheless, the Communists did well in the municipal elections of December '76, holding their total vote fairly steady in the face of a sharp rise in abstentions (34.9 percent of the electorate abstained in December '76 as opposed to a mere 8.2 percent in April '75). In the December '79 elections the Communists, in a coalition with the MDP, took 19 percent of the votes—improving their position not only in their traditional bastions but also getting 10 percent of the vote in such places as Braga, one of the centers of the anti-Communist movement in 1975.

Short-term Communist defeat, therefore, gave way to a longer-term consolidation of Communist strength at the grass roots. Short-term Socialist victory, on the other hand, was followed by a longer-term decline. There are several reasons for this reversal.

While the Communists enjoyed the luxury of opposition in the years '76-79, the Socialist governments were obliged to take stringent economic measures, causing a deterioration of workers' purchasing power that was without parallel in recent economic history,

except perhaps in Chile under Pinochet. The Socialists had little choice in the face of chronic balance-of-payment deficits and the IMF's insistence that Portugal—if it was to receive the substantial foreign loans needed to prevent the country's bankruptcy—had to implement stringent austerity measures. For these the Socialists indeed paid a heavy price in popular support. The political beneficiaries, of course, were the Communists.

Socialists in government did not display great competence. Soares was a poor administrator, and the party functioned more as an employment exchange for choice jobs in the public administration. Most important, the party was never able to resolve its deep internal divisions over ideology and tactics.

The Communists used the period of Socialist preeminence to purge opportunists and establish a strong organization. By 1978 the PCP claimed 145,512 members, 58.6 percent of them workers in industry and agriculture—35 percent less than 30 years old, 47 percent between 30 and 50 years old. In 1979 the party claimed 164,000 militants. The Communists' union organization expanded its influence; Communist cooperatives and collective farms absorbed many unemployed rural workers. The Communist parliamentary group acted effectively, and Communist municipal officials proved efficient and honest. Consciously imitating the Italian precedent, the PCP hoped to turn Evora, the major city of the Alentejo, into a "Portuguese Bologna." The polarization, so apparent in 1975, continued. This prevented effective action by the Socialists' government and helped strip them of support.

Socialist preeminence had rested on an enforced and uneasy compromise between two powerful, antagonistic, and regionally defined social and political movements. The Socialists had taken the lead in the anti-Communist counteroffensive in the summer of 1975; but the commitment of many of their supporters to the party's principles was tenuous at best. The Socialists, in fact, were much less scrupulous than were the Democratic Socialists within the military about accepting rightist support. Once the

balance of power had changed after the November 1975 countercoup, it was inevitable that in time many who had supported the Socialists or the military Democratic Socialists in the anti-Communist and anti-Gonçalvist struggle of 1975 would find their way back to more congenial surroundings. Yet, because the compromise reached by the end of 1975 represented a truce more than a resolution of the conflict, the Socialists' governments as well as the later governments that were led by technocrats found it difficult to implement measures that threatened the unspoken demarcation upon which social peace was based. This demarcation, as far as the Communists were concerned, was very clear. To them it meant primarily the defense of the cooperative and collective farms that had replaced the latifundia expropriated in the South; it meant nationalizations, and it meant the constitution of 1976. Thus the PCP positioned itself very successfully as the defender of "the conquests of the revolution."

From 1975 to 1980, therefore, the PCP moved from flirtation with the idea of imposing its hegemony upon the nation, in alliance with the MFA, toward an unstated but clear maneuver to establish its hegemony over the left. If in 1975 Portugal had looked to some like Czechoslovakia in 1948, by early 1980 it is beginning to look like Italy, a similarity reinforced by the visit of Enrico Berlinguer, secretary-general of the Italian CP, to Lisbon in September 1979, at the beginning of the parliamentary campaign. Then Berlinguer warmly embraced Cunhal, whom four years earlier he had condemned for what the Italian Communists then saw as the PCP's "Third World adventurism."

The basis of Communist gains and Socialist losses in the December '79 elections indeed was a sharp polarization of Portugal's society. The old regional antagonism now has been paralleled by a consolidation of antagonism along class lines. The new prime minister, Sá Carneiro, has once been referred to as "the Cunhal of the right." The phrase was resented by both political leaders, though its virtue is to demonstrate how fragile Portugal's democracy remains. □

David Bromwich

10/89

Bad Faith of *Apocalypse Now*

A*pocalypse Now* is a piece of visionary propaganda about the Vietnamese war—oppressively ugly for most of its length, with an emotional sordidness that teases and at last wears down and baffles the audience—a confidently brutal film, grating in its record of the terrible events, aimless-seeming, like the sequence of actions it describes, and like them difficult to learn from. But the general direction of the propaganda is plain. It is prowar. All its reservations concern the way the war was fought: our American strategy, we learn here, was paralyzed by two great burdens of a liberal state, *conscience* and *technology*. We should have forgone these, and fought terror with terror, in single-soul combat from one village to the next. Even so we might not have won the war; but we would have saved our souls. Our mistake was to suppose that conscience ever came into the question. We opted out of any authentic combat by using advanced weapons; and at the same time, we disarmed ourselves for soul-battle with the vice of pity. Unhindered by these, the Vietcong could range freely, and do what the logic of victory demanded.

The heroes of *Apocalypse Now* are kindred to the guerrillas whom they oppose: an American, the psychic and nominal descendant of Conrad's Kurtz, who has unburdened himself of both air-support and compassion for friend and foe alike, and gathered about him the cadres necessary to a successful war of terror; and the hired assassin, Willard, who is sent to "terminate" Kurtz's private war, but who before carrying out his mission comes to regard his target as a giant among men, alone equipped to fight war in the spirit of war. In its ideology this is a thoroughly self-consistent film—its meanest assumptions are laid bare, and their inhumanity conveyed without stint, in the screenplay. The picture of the war conveyed in the battle scenes, however, is at once so impressive and so sickening as to have misled critics, and silenced

those whom it did not mislead. The only point of a late report like this is to unmask a *trahison*—a job other critics would have served the public by performing earlier. *Apocalypse Now* is a work that affects to "tell us the worst," and for that reason it is well to know the worst about it.

Somewhere in the background is Nietzsche, with his attack on pity and the "slave morality" that fosters it, his lament for the lost spirit of command in the stronger races, and his embrace of nihilism, the untimely guest of the *fin de siècle*. On the lower slopes of right-wing romanticism, John Milius, author of the screenplay of *Apocalypse Now* and a Hollywood Nietzschean, has long made his home: before undertaking to adapt Conrad for Francis Ford Coppola, he had written several films of a similar tendency. His opening scene sets the tone for the entire story. We see the American secret operative, Willard, first lying in bed—amid hallucinations in which a ceiling fan turns into a helicopter's rotor blades—then standing before a mirror, thinking to himself, "Every minute I stayed out of the jungle, I knew I was getting weaker and Charlie was getting stronger." From the first, his whole experience of the war is governed by a simple opposition between weakness and strength. More subtle counters are never proposed.

Roused from his enforced idleness, Willard is told by two soldiers to report to his superiors; they have a line on him, because he has already committed a political murder, and he is now under their protection. Assassinate Kurtz, he is instructed. Kurtz is a desperado, who has separated himself from the war effort of half a million of his countrymen and embarked on battles of his own that have finally carried him, in pursuit of the enemy, into Cambodia. Kurtz has ordered four assassinations of political leaders and apparently chosen the right targets, since the Vietcong have been completely stymied in the wake of these deaths. But this action, like his others, was

unauthorized. He is now the guru and absolute ruler of a mingled following of Vietnamese and Cambodian primitives. He has gone too far. His latest radio transmissions are played for Willard, and they sound incoherent, but not more insane than the war itself.

The army must terminate Kurtz because of his insubordination. Willard, on the other hand, is fascinated by his success. He, like Kurtz, has seen the catastrophic absurdity of the army's war, and he is drawn to the legends of a man who followed this perception to its logical end. Most of the film records Willard's journey up river, on a gunboat manned by Americans who know nothing of his mission. Along the way he reads secret dossiers on Kurtz, growing ever more fascinated. Kurtz went to Harvard; was a serious student of international relations; climbed up the army ladder, and was being groomed for Chief of Staff; was, in short, a perfect success story, of the kind familiar to us from very different films; until he chucked it all, enlisted in the Special Services, and went to Southeast Asia. (Throughout *Apocalypse Now* Kurtz's affiliation is called Special Services, never the Green Berets—to have mentioned the *name* might have reminded us too vividly of the *thing*, and made us wonder if this was an appropriate field of action for an exemplary product of Harvard, whose only fault is an overabundance of altruistic impulses.) Why, Willard asks himself, did Kurtz give it all up? What accounts for his great refusal? What turned so "professional" a soldier into a prodigy of rebellion? While brooding on these questions he has a chance to observe the war closely.

Willard notices two things. First, the soldiers accompanying him on the boat are desperately afraid, but conceal their fear with drugs and a rich overlay of American habits; one of them is surprised in the jungle by a tiger, which he thinks is a sniper—he resolves ever after to stay "on the boat"; the trouble with America generally, Willard decides, is that it too has decided to stay on the boat in Vietnam. Second, and quite apart from their fears, the Americans he encounters are utterly unserious about war. During a helicopter attack in which he participates—at the end of which a Vietnamese village and the forest surrounding it are napalmed, and razed to the ground—Willard takes stock of the cavalry officer in command, who plays Wagner over the loudspeakers to "scare the shit out of them" as his helicopters descend on the village. This officer is mad, yet somehow sympathetic; the pride of his men and their lucky fate: the personified spirit of this war. His most notable display of strategy comes in his order to clear a

beachhead for a surfing exhibition by one of his men, as the battle enfolds and darkens the scene. Several are in fact killed in battle, but the rest adjust to their daily horror not a trace more imaginatively than they respond to the sex shows they watch in the evenings after, put on by *Playboy* bunnies. Yet the one such show that we see is extremely hard to credit, and forms a striking instance of the film's dissipation of its own energies—the fretting away of plausible thematic contrasts, in a chaos of unmeaning disgust for which the disgust of the war itself can be no justification.

NOWHERE IS the film's nihilism clearer, or truer to itself, than in the central incident of Willard's journey. His gunboat crosses the path of a civilian junk, floating unauthorized in the guerrilla-infested river, and the captain orders his men, Willard's escort and accomplices, to stop the junk and board it. This they do, to search for concealed rifles or grenades, all the while nervously eyeing the family of passengers on the junk; the American soldiers are very young, more in dread of the encounter than the family is, and looking for the slip or start of betrayal that will set their machine guns firing; and, finally, there is a slip, and the family is massacred. No weapons are found. But presently a woman is uncovered who is only wounded. The men are about to take her on board and convey her to a hospital, but here Willard seizes the initiative and shoots her. Saving her would only be saving our conscience, he tells them. It is this same combination of tactical idiocy in battle, and the idiocy of conscience afterward, that is losing the war. Instead of the wounded woman the Americans take on board a puppy, one of many domestic animals left behind in the massacre. To this Willard says nothing, but he need say nothing. We are meant to see him as having had much the best of the exchange with the sentimental young soldiers. His shooting of the wounded and innocent woman was ugly but honest, and "clean" as the war itself is unclean. Even before he meets Kurtz he has advanced beyond the emotional habits implied in the phrase, "staying on the boat."

So he enters Kurtz's temple compound well-prepared for the meeting with his legendary precursor. First, however, he is beset by a scruffy hanger-on of Kurtz's, played by Dennis Hopper—a reporter with an imagination blitzed and bombed out by too continuous a dose of drugs, war, and the lingo of the counterculture. This character evidently exists as a kind of drainage system or escape valve for the high seriousness of *all* of Brando's

performance as Kurtz, but, though his presence is understandable in this light, his pothead apothegms and high jinks are out of keeping with the whole tenor of the film. When we do get to see Brando, he is immensely slow, bulging, ungainly, but with an angular sculpted profile (we often see him in profile), somewhat reminiscent of Orson Welles as Kane at the end, lumbering across the frozen marble rooms of Xanadu. Kurtz's opening speech is pure—rather soft and sweet—Brando, queerly incongruous under the circumstances: it is a memory of a favorite bed of flowers, in his hometown, in America. But most of the speeches that follow are the testament of a man who has gone to the bottom of life to learn its horror.

The film, far less elusive in this respect than Conrad's story, completely identifies horror with truth, and "the horror" with the truth revealed by Vietnam. Kurtz reads from "The Hollow Men" (affectingly) and the books in his study, *From Ritual to Romance* and *The Golden Bough*, are lingered over by the camera (idiotically)—Kurtz's books, in the scheme of this film, would more likely be *The Genealogy of Morals* and *The Will to Power*. Aside from the beauty and clarity of his madness, Kurtz's final legacy to Willard is contained in his injunction: "Don't judge me." What this really means is: "I am beyond judgment." As Kurtz is murdered, shots of Willard's butchery are intercut, in montage, with shots of the natives outside the temple slaughtering an ox, so that there is even the suggestion that he is a sacrificial victim of the war. All about the compound, scattered on the ground or hanging from the trees, are the bodies of the Vietcong whom Kurtz has killed. Good work, we are encouraged to say, as Willard doubtless says to himself, with all due respect to the horror of it.

How can a film so unmistakable, or in the language of fashionable criticism, so "unmediated" in its ideology, have been misinterpreted? By the separate and seductive mediation of images. The screenplay follows out a single doctrine, indeed drums it into us till the soul sickens, but the images can seem to tell a different story, especially in the helicopter-attack sequence. By the strange economy of its several parts, the audience's hopeful expectations, and the duplicity of what Erwin Panofsky called the "coexpressible" power of word and image, the film in effect grants us an opportunity to regard Kurtz's war as a terrible but logical extension of the army's, and, with the battle scenes fresh in mind, to condemn both. But the truth is that Kurtz is fighting an altogether different

war, and that is why the army has to kill him. *His war is not an extension of the army's but an alternative to it*; and this war the screenplay heartily endorses, or—to be absolutely faithful to the terms in which it is effected—"refuses to judge." The tragedy of the story, if that is the word for it, is to be located in Kurtz's commitment of his destiny to an unworthy set of beneficiaries.

Kurtz's tragic knowledge is to have recognized this himself: "Exterminate the brutes," reads a fugitive note he has at some point addressed to himself, which Willard discovers among his papers.* And brutes they are, as we see them in the film. Willard, after having murdered Kurtz, lurks warily in the shadows of the temple, afraid that the wrath of Kurtz's followers will avenge itself on the destroyer of their god; but he finds that he need have had no fear, for on seeing him, and fully comprehending his deed, they shrink from his presence and give every sign of submission to their new god. They are contemptible, and fit only to be ruled. This final confrontation with Kurtz's oriental band makes an ugly scene; but its emotions—the sense of power, mingled with revulsion from the victims of power—might be paralleled in the pages of Carlyle on *The Nigger Question*, and several celebrated tableaux from the German cinema in the decades before Hitler. At bottom, the film knows exactly what it is about, and the cue is given in the climactic stand-off between Willard and his inherited minions, with their different silences—his, the silence of a terrible freedom, of the blood-deed; theirs, the silence of weakness, of fear, of a loathsome blank horror. Willard has of course already ordered the air strike that will exterminate the brutes as the closing

*I misremembered the line as identical with the version of it in *Heart of Darkness*. In fact, the words of the film are: "Drop the bomb. Exterminate them all." It is a perfect instance of the character of this adaptation as a whole—faithful, in an obvious and unimportant way, while shrinking from any open engagement with the politics of Kurtz's madness. The meaning of the line, the revelation of darkness that makes the last appeal of an all-devouring racism, is lost in the hint that Kurtz would prefer to destroy all races equally.

Besides, *Apocalypse Now* has a second and more congenial source in Michael Herr's *Dispatches*. Herr wrote the narrative portions of the film spoken by Willard, and his journalistic style, a sprawl of understatement richly drugged on the rock-nihilism of the 1960s, is a suitable vehicle for his sentiments. *Dispatches* is the record of a weird trip. It celebrates the attractive-repulsive uniqueness of Vietnam, and sings the glories of a jungle sunset framed in a helicopter's window. It thus helped to create the moral atmosphere in which it was possible for Coppola to describe his film as "an attempt to capture the *sensuousness* of this war."

credits flash on, a little apocalypse on which Coppola lavishes all his rhetorical cunning. It is a destruction for which the audience has been neatly set up, and about which they can feel comparatively at ease. These natives—unlike some of those shown earlier in the film—do not bear much thinking about.

TWO TALES ABOUT the genesis of *Apocalypse Now* have been put out for general consumption. According to the first, leaked soon after the shooting was completed, Coppola—whose previous films had established him as an exceedingly gifted liberal director, the successor of Fred Zinnemann and the early Kazan—had been converted to a twilight-of-the-gods chauvinism, under the influence of Milius. In consequence, what had begun as an antiwar film became, in the course of its making, a defense of a *proud* colonialism, with Brando as the law-giver to the lesser breeds. But this first tale was quickly supplanted. According to the second, Coppola learned the realities of the Vietnamese war while enduring the breakdowns of his production company on location in the Philippines; he was himself driven mad by the tropics, like the Americans who fought there; hence, the film as we have it, a strange mixture of things but above all our first true picture of the war. Tale number two is cant. Coppola did not endure anything resembling the horrors of war, unless it can be verified that he had napalm raining down on him, or snipers trying to pick him off night and day, in his director's chair. Nevertheless, Coppola has contrived to work his publicity angle on the film into the film itself, in a self-referential glimpse of the director exhorting bewildered soldiers (actors) not to stop on the beachhead but keep going at all costs, because "it's for television" (the movies). This little cameo reeks of show biz. It has nothing in common with the spirit of the great signatures to which it alludes—Raoul Coutard's camera swinging round to catch Godard, between frantic paces to keep afloat a totally improvised adventure; or Hitchcock climbing aboard a train, struggling manfully with an enormous string bass. On the contrary, Coppola's intrusion is calculated to please all those hierophants of affectation for whom the will, if pretentious enough, is always equal to the deed.

Brando has been judged by most critics the weakest link in the film. He does make his entrance a little too concertedly as the whimper-not-the-bang mentioned elsewhere in the screenplay, and his improvisations show nothing better than an actor of genius performing hastily and under

duress. But in the long run he will have come away from the project with cleaner hands than either Milius or Coppola. If the improvisations are often ineffectual, that is the fault of a director the final verse of whose apocalypse was yet to be determined on the day of shooting, so that its contents were left to the auguries of the actor. Even so, we know that Brando put several hours on film, and we are left wondering about the footage that remained on the cutting-room floor. Did Kurtz never rage or stamp? hurl himself against the wickedness of his fate? burst into declamations that gave some hint of the temperament Willard found reflected in his notebooks? Brando delivers one line with perfect force, and it is the best in the film; the line is very ordinary, and only a great actor could make it seem much good: "I was expecting someone like you," he says to Willard; "What were you expecting?" In sum, his improvisations give us plenty of rhetorical silences, and a sense of dignity, with the curious possibility that there are reserves of humor in Kurtz. The impression we have from the evidence, incomplete though it may be, is that Brando tried to complicate the character by adding to it a dimension of evil, and that Coppola as editor brought him back into line, by representing evil only in its moments of assurance and eloquent self-justification.

WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE of this latest addition to the annals of imperialism, and of its reception by a stupefied public? The depth of the bluff, together with the utter want of cogency in the response, ought to make us reflect with a renewed vigilance on the dangers of all spectacle. We might at the same time pay homage to Brecht, the greatest modern prophet of those dangers. What Brecht feared was the spell of participation that the indulgence in spectacle could cast over an audience and the consequent tendency of mass art to reinforce old habits of feeling, rather than make us reconsider them. He knew the importance of thought, *in* art as much as outside it, to the health and fortitude of a culture. To break the spell of participation, Brecht favored interruptions even in the most absorbing of works, or rather especially in them: interruptions that say to the audience, Stop; Think; Do not be taken in too easily. He believed that an exemplary intelligence could be incorporated in art, and shared with the audience.

Apocalypse Now is the most potent testimony in recent years of the sickness of mere spectacle. The film is a nightmare, its apologists tell us. Yes, but a

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Maurice Wolfthal

The Good Old Days of the New York Public Schools

Students aren't what they used to be. In the Good Old Days everyone learned. At least everyone learned to read. Immigrant children from Europe at the turn of the century worked hard at school and succeeded. Why can't kids today be like them? They can't read because they're lazy and good for nothing. They've been spoiled by television, rock and roll, permissiveness, and welfare. If only we could keep them in the same grade year after year, if only we could bring back corporal punishment, then they'd shape up and learn to read. Bring back white shirts and ties, separate schools for boys and girls, the Pledge of Allegiance, and prayer in the schools. Then scholarship and intellect, or at least literacy, would flourish once again, as in the Good Old Days . . .

So goes the common lament. It is so often heard, inside the schools and out, that it is taken to be gospel truth. But is this vision of a paradise lost an accurate one? Did everyone in the Good Old Days—an unspecified time in the past—love learning, or has nostalgia draped a veil over the illiterates of yesteryear?

Let's look at the general record of achievement in the early years of the New York public schools. Untold thousands of children from Europe never even registered. Jacob Riis, journalist and muckraker, estimated that in 1891 more than 50,000 school-age children between 5 and 14 received no schooling at all. Among those who did attend, truancy was rampant. In 1890 the average daily attendance was one half the register. Furthermore, half the students commonly left school at 14, the legal working age. Of those who started high school, half did not finish. And although the truancy rate later abated, the 50 percent dropout rate for high school students remained constant well into the 1940s.

Poor attendance was not the only problem plaguing the early years. Classrooms were often hugely overcrowded, and schools often ran on double session. Pedagogy was frequently criticized for regimentation, bureaucracy, and rigid discipline. In 1893 J. M. Rice wrote: "The spirit of the school is, 'Do what you like with the child, immobilize him, automatize him, dehumanize him, but save, save the minutes.'"

MASSIVE ACADEMIC FAILURE was a fact of life. Every year thousands of children were "left back" for lack of progress. In 1904, 1905, and 1906, the *New York Times* reported that an estimated 25 to 50 percent of all students were between one and seven years too old for their grade. In 1909 academic failure was the subject of Leonard Ayres's book, *Laggards in Our Schools*. Two years later the *Times* ran an article headlined "Why Do So Many Children Fail At School?" One public school principal lamented in 1905:

It makes me so mad to look at them sometimes that I feel like crying. No wonder, when they get to the higher grades, their teacher has to spend a lot of time in work which ought to have been finished long before they were turned over to her. It is very discouraging, when a pupil has reached the seventh or eighth year, to find that he or she doesn't know how to write a sentence without making a mistake in grammar, and yet that is what happens every day in the public schools of New York.

Similarly, in 1911, poor student performance prompted "a despairing teacher in this city's public schools" to send to the *Times* samples of atrocious writing by students in grade 8A. The newspaper reprinted some of the work and asked how these children—"judging by their names, they are of English, German, and Irish extraction"—could ever have been promoted.

The gap in achievement between students in

different parts of the city was extreme. For this reason, the *Times*, in 1859, opposed a plan of the Superintendent of Public Education to rate teachers and schools by rating the progress of their students. So vast was the gap separating the children of the 6th Ward from those of the 18th Ward, for example, that "No matter how faithful the teaching, no matter how admirable the processes by which wild and ragged urchins from the street find their latent intellects developed in the schools about the Five Points, it is impossible that these schools should ever be rated as high as schools and teachers in more favored parts of the City."

More than 70 years later, the public schools were still incapable of producing scholars equally in all parts of the city. In his study, "The Economic and Social Correlatives of School Progress in New York City," J. B. Maller concluded in 1933:

The public schools in New York City differ greatly from one another with regard to scholastic progress. There are some schools in which the rate of progress is many times higher than in other schools. . . . Any statement concerning achievement in New York City schools without regard to the wide variation among schools is meaningless and misleading.

As for reading achievement, glib comparisons cannot be made between then and now. First, because school populations are not comparable. In an era when there was a great demand for young unskilled labor, many of today's students would not have been in school at all. Second, the early history of the public schools provides little in the way of standardized test scores for statistical comparison.

There is little doubt, however, that poor reading was a key factor in school failure. This was true because reading ability has always been crucial to success in academic subjects, and because reading ability per se was often the yardstick for promotion. From the large number of children who, at the turn of the century, were made to repeat a grade, it is easy to surmise that the average reading level was not very high. Indeed, J. M. Rice, who observed public schools in several cities, wrote in 1893:

In New York City the primary reading is so poor that the children are scarcely able to recognize new words at sight at the end of the second school year. Even the third-year reading is miserable. In many cities the children read better at the end of the second year than they do in New York at the end of the third.

Similarly, in 1906 the *Times* bemoaned the fact

that "Over half of all pupils registered in the New York public schools have not progressed further than the Second Reader." That same year, T. C. Mitchill of Boys' High School expressed outrage "that many public schools are graduating boys who are to all practical intents almost as illiterate as when they entered school."

AS FOR STATISTICS, the citywide average for grade 8B was found to be below grade level on the Stanford Achievement Test in reading in 1929, as were both grades 6B and 8B in 1933. The *Times* estimated that New York had so many adults who could not read that "We have enough illiterates to make a city the size of Denver." In 1934, 8,000 to 9,000 elementary students took part in a remedial reading project. In 1935 the *Times* reported that there existed "wide variations in the reading ability of the city's school children."

On the eve of American entry into World War II, it was found that poor reading was a national problem. Penn State College announced that between 8 and 25 percent of American schoolchildren were retarded in reading, and the *Times*, citing the American Council on Education, reported that "even college and high school students in large numbers are seriously deficient in reading." Thousands of army-age Americans, upon mobilization, were found to be unable to read at a fourth-grade level. In 1944 Western Michigan College was offering remedial reading to its own students, and the *Times* reported that "From 15 to 18 percent of college students throughout the country have an average of ninth-grade reading ability or lower."

In New York City, the New Stanford Reading Test was given to 6B and 8B pupils in 1940. Once again extreme differences were found within the city. The City College of New York was offering a program of remedial reading to the city's children. In 1943, 90 percent of all students entering the public high schools were reading below grade level. In 1944, the Division of Instructional Research of the Board of Education attempted to discover why, in the elementary and junior high schools, "pupils with average intelligence or better show retardation of several years in reading." The Board of Education's high school journal, *High Points*, cautioned in 1948 that although the citywide average was slightly above the norm, there existed a "large number of children who need help in reading."

Reading failure continued to plague the schools throughout the 1950s. In a poll of the High School Teachers Association in 1955, 706 teachers said

their students had little reading ability, 314 said their students had a medium ability, and only 15 said they had much ability. Of children entering the academic high schools, 55 percent were reading below level, some as much as five years below. It is quite probable that reading failure was even more prevalent among children entering the vocational high schools. In 1955 *High Points* indicated that an extreme gap in reading ability existed among junior high school graduates: "Some are virtually non-readers while others read on a college level." It estimated that over 10,000 students entering high school in 1954 were two or more years behind in reading.

Every year between 1956 and 1959, tens of thousands of students were left back, most of them for reading retardation. In 1958, Joseph Loretan, Associate Superintendent of Schools, revealed extensive reading disability among elementary school graduates. Testing of the fourth grade a year later indicated that "Dramatic differences in scholastic achievement have been found among the city's public schools."

The public schools were not able to break that pattern of unequal reading achievement in the 1960s. Periodically the Board of Education announced that thousands of children were being left back, but when standardized scores began to be published on a regular annual basis, it became obvious that the citywide average was declining. Furthermore, it was clear from the published

statistics that schools in different neighborhoods continued to achieve at very different levels. In 1965, for example, when more than half of all children in grades two through eight were reading below level, there were at least 12 schools where 50 percent of the fifth grade scored 9.0 or better. In 1967 fifth-grade students at one school averaged 4.1 while those at another averaged 8.4. In 1970 scores showed that an increasing percentage of students were reading below level, but some schools maintained averages two years above grade. In 1973 fifth-graders at one school averaged 2.9 while at another school the average was 7.8. In 1975 it was found again that "As in other years, schools in middle-class areas posted far higher pupil scores than those in economically disadvantaged areas." That year the eighth grade at one school averaged 5.8, while at another school the average was 10.9.

TO SUM UP: Even as the citywide reading average declined, students from higher socioeconomic groups continued to surpass national norms by wide margins. The tragedy, then, is not that the citywide average is going down (a phenomenon due more to the departure of the middle class from the public schools in the last two decades than to anything else), but that the schools continue to be unable to translate equal opportunity into equal academic achievement.

It is time to acknowledge that the schools have consistently failed to educate a large proportion of children, that from the start there have been dropouts and poor readers, and that since their inception the public schools have met with only partial success. It is time to stop maligning the students of today by comparing them to a glorious past that is more myth than reality. It is time to stop wallowing in nostalgia and start finding ways to educate all children. □

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MOVIES

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nightmare whose ill effects will reverberate in waking life. The dominant feeling—for it is not a conviction, and if it once came under the scrutiny of our intelligence it would cease to exist—a feeling that the victims of imperialism are in some way responsible for the enormities we have committed against them, that somehow *they drew us into it*: this might be associated with Conrad's original no less than with the adaptation we now possess. And Brecht unquestionably would have had much to tell us about the spell of participation under which we read *Heart of Darkness* too. Yet in one important way Conrad's story makes its impres-

sion fairly: it earns its dark view of humanity by the power of incident and metaphor, the reiterated power of drama itself. Whereas *Apocalypse Now* relies for its force on the existence of an audience that has tired of thinking about the war. After thought, and in place of it, comes spectacle. Most of the audience will rise from the theater hating the Vietnamese war, and the Vietnamese. It would be surprising if many came away knowing that the war was a result of political decisions made in America, and military decisions made in Vietnam, which were neither inevitable in themselves nor rendered inevitable by the curse of the jungle. □

Ann Douglas

James T. Farrell, the Artist Militant

James T. Farrell (1904-1979) is usually hailed as the author of *Studs Lonigan*, a book he survived by 45 years and roughly as many books. Yet if there is anything James Farrell was not, it was a one-book author. *Studs Lonigan* is probably Farrell's best work; it is not his only major one. But Farrell's impatience at being typecast simply as the author of *Studs* was more than an artist's disappointment and anger at being valued so slightly. Whether *Studs* was his greatest novel or not, he was sure he could not be adequately approached by the evaluation of his individual works. For his had been a planned and protracted effort.

In 1940, when a young man asked Farrell how he should go about becoming a writer, Farrell's first piece of advice, characteristically, was that his correspondent read the biographies of great writers; writing is "hard work," he explained, and a "life-long occupation." Farrell did not simply write books, he had a career; he willed to have it and that will lay behind every sentence typed onto every page. It was a career of conviction. In a 1975 interview, Farrell remarked that many of his early beliefs were unshaken, if modified. He still admired Trotsky, while realizing that history did not "turn out" as Trotsky had predicted. He still believed that "the artist fares best if he's militant because the artist is thrown on a hostile environment." This was Farrell's credo.

Farrell grew up as the son of an Irish Catholic teamster on the south side of Chicago. He wrote movingly about the ethnic urban working, lower-middle and middle classes, most notably in *Studs Lonigan*, the Danny O'Neill pentalogy, the Bernard Carr trilogy, *This Man and This Woman*, and a handful of the short stories and novellas that span his career. Farrell's work forms a special subset of the proletarian or class novel, a subset

that might be labeled the novel of impoverished environment. Time and time again, Farrell depicted people living in worlds unsuited for full human life. Farrell attended the University of Chicago as a young man in the 1920s, when its department of sociology was changing American thinking. The influence on Farrell is unmistakable, but he was a novelist, not a sociologist. For Farrell, sociology was as much a metaphor as a method. He wrote about people so enmeshed and trapped in the stereotypes of their culture that their lives *are* sociology; they are static and nonhistorical, creatures of paradigm, not of process. His heroes are young men, like Bernard Carr, literally in search of a "biography," obsessed with attaining a visible and complete life.

By every device available to a highly talented writer, including at times brilliantly appropriate language, Farrell brought home to his readers that his characters are really "there." *Studs Lonigan* with his punk pretensions, his failing heart, his cliché-clotted mind; Danny O'Neill, always "the slave of what he wanted others to think of him"; Danny's mother, Liz O'Neill, with her few remaining teeth and her many toothaches, her constant trips to the church, her aversion to housework, who throws up her skirt and flaunts her bare "bacon" when someone insults her; Danny's father, Jim O'Neill, a teamster, kind, generous, overworked, ignorant of social causes, unable to understand why he has lived and is dying, simply accepting "what we call another day"; Danny's good-looking aunt, Margaret, whose strengths bring no reward, whose weaknesses precipitate the determining events in her life, slowly going under a tide of anger and alcohol: such figures exist as entirely and intimately as Farrell's readers know themselves to exist. Yet the felt

humanity of Studs, of the O'Neills, does not insure them a human existence, and this discrepancy is the source of Farrell's art and his defiance. Farrell protested life itself, the "universe of time," the "cancer" he wrote of in his later years, the seriatim moments that push people through existence without necessarily enriching them, the moments that transform experience into an endurance test. "History has no purpose," Farrell wrote in a late novel and demonstrated in everything he produced. All the more reason that society should provide, if not meaning, at least, within its limited means, justice. Farrell depicted a social and economic order committed to consumption, to distracting people from the void it itself widens, to waste.

Farrell's anger was never directed against his characters, nor, a harder feat, did he condescend to them. He kept a vast collection of notecards near his "study" (a small writing desk, holding a typewriter and facing the window, placed at one end of his kitchen), one card for each of the characters who appear and disappear in his vast Balzacean chronicle of American life. Farrell cared for his characters; each was a test of his capacity to understand and convey equality. He put his readers into their world without introduction or exploration. He was interested in consciousness less as the privilege of the writer than as the reflection, even the mimicry, of social programming, and as the forming intention to escape the milieu that stereotypes it. Farrell made little use of an overarching narrative consciousness, whether to coax his characters into articulation in the Jamesian way, or to mother their mutism as Dreiser did. Farrell's books are, for better and worse, in this important sense uncontrolled. He was in a difficult position. A novelist writing in what can still be best defined as the post-Jamesian period of fiction and criticism, he did not believe that consciousness is equivalent to reality, that it is the place where all events, ideas, and people must come to be tested, examined, validated.

FARRELL CREATED A FICTIONAL WORLD very like the actual one his characters inhabit. Things happen—two men paint a house and talk awkwardly about loyalty, a boy and a girl sit in a tree in a park, a woman takes another drink when she has resolved not to; consciousness, while often painfully

present, wrongly forecasts experience or lags in its rear, marshaling the clichés that will stamp out what vitality it may possess. Consciousness in Farrell's world is not natural, it is hardly taught within the system Americans euphemistically refer to as educational, and in a country where people, in Farrell's words, "can't do . . . much" with their feelings, emotion is a dangerous but frequent substitute for awareness. Farrell knew that nothing the uneducated of whatever class can suggest to the educated is more troubling than the possibility that consciousness is not a delight, nor a refuge, nor even a problem for large masses of people who are allowed to have no epistemological mastery over life at all.

At the close of *Studs Lonigan*, while Studs is dying of pneumonia, his father, Paddy Lonigan, an upwardly mobile Irishman now hard hit by the Depression, watches a parade of Communist sympathizers. Paddy perceives that they look "happy," but he doesn't understand them or their purpose, and he goes to a bar to get drunk. His failure to respond is a measure of his predicament, but it is also a measure of the difficulties of the Communists. Paddy Lonigan's limited consciousness is a fact whose evolution Farrell understands and traces; he respects Lonigan's inabilities as social truth and human tragedy. Farrell was strikingly willing to admit that even his heroes, Danny O'Neill and Bernard Carr, both writers by aspiration and both usually taken as copies of Farrell, are failures. In their author's words, Danny is an "unsuccessful conformist," Bernard has "sold out." Their rejection of their milieu, Danny's of Roman Catholic poverty, Carr's of his family and later of Communism, seems to exhaust their capacity for creativity. So hard is it, Farrell believed, to clear and use the mind.

Farrell always defended the author's right to handle whatever material attracted him, despite strictures from the left or right. Yet he did so in part because he believed that writing alone could be permanently political. Writing, for Farrell, was the vocation of the rebel. Farrell described writing as "work" in the Marxist sense, the result of "social labor" performed "that he [the author] may have developed his talent," and the incentive to "lifelong" effort. One says the best and worst that can be said of Farrell when one acknowledges that

inspiration figured little in his idea and practice of artistic production. Writing was paying back a debt, making a promise, hurling a challenge. Farrell couldn't stop writing because the critics ignored or condemned him; he couldn't stop writing because he had at times nothing or little new to say; he couldn't even afford to admit that such might be the case.

Anyone who writes knows that sometimes one must write badly because the psychological need to keep writing is greater than the actual ability to write well, that even bad writing insures that the keys will still feel familiar when one at last sits down with something on one's mind. Farrell knew this, and he knew, like most writers, but with special poignancy, that writing keeps off the thought of death in its most frightening form; the sense of duration, of slippage. "I sit down at a small desk," Farrell wrote in a late novel. "The night is passing. I shall change the sentence. The night is in process. I shall change the sentence again." Yet writing was not simply therapy for Farrell, although it served therapeutic needs. Farrell went on detailing the difficulties of maturation in late-capitalist American culture not only because he needed to do so, but because the story as he told it was interesting whether anyone else thought so or not, and perhaps most of all because his act in spelling it out was the only thing surely not predicted by the conglomeration of cosmic accident and corporate design that passes for reality.

IF FARRELL HAD NOT POSSESSED a major talent and a major subject, his feat of endurance would be less interesting if still significant. The inheritor of a largely unscrutinized American literary tradition represented by Dreiser, Anderson, and Lewis, Farrell had both the talent and the subject. He was a master in the creation of mass scenes: raging, hilarious, bitter family quarrels with a cast of dozens, piously organized civic and religious festivities, violent, protracted New Year's Eve

parties. Few have been better chroniclers than Farrell of that particularly American experience and subject, the mood: the endless series of frightened adjustments called living, the lunging and inching toward attention by each individual psyche within a hopelessly blurred crowd, the troubled intimacy with which one tentatively fixes and appropriates one's alien *persona*, the confusion in which one haphazardly sorts the fragmented hurtful thoughts one wakes up to and goes to sleep with. No one has equalled Farrell's sustained delineation of second- and third-generation Americans: women who must live too often as stereotypes within the minds of would-be stereotypes, men who are fans and outsiders in their adopted land, incarnations of social anxiety.

With Farrell's death, we have lost our finest literary perspective on the meaning of assimilation and ambition in American life, and a writer uniquely and admirably free from that most malignant form of cultural life: audience dependency. Farrell was always ready to fulminate about the critics' neglect and misunderstanding of him, but in the last analysis, he wrote for himself. Writing for Farrell was the only postponement of the inevitable—a definition that covers most of life as Farrell portrays it—that admits what it postpones, and thus genuinely *happens*. For Farrell, writing was still a synonym for self-sufficiency; and this was the most radical self-definition possible to one who believed that America was becoming a nation of consumers and spectators. We possess, as he meant us to, his example and his books, Farrell's work constitutes the last important experiment to date in American literature with what can be viewed as deliberately unedited material. The malice he drew from censors and critics was out of proportion to the boldness, or the awkwardness, of his enterprise. The censorship battle is over; the critical one has barely begun. Others will honor James Farrell; they will read and sort and care for his works if we do not. □

Murray Hausknecht

Liberalism's Fifth Column

THE NEOCONSERVATIVES: THE MEN WHO ARE CHANGING AMERICA'S POLITICS, by Peter Steinfels. New York: Simon and Shuster. 335 pp. \$11.95.

If the New Left put an indelible mark on the '60s, the neoconservatives will surely become a major part of the image of the past ten years. Peter Steinfels's anatomy of their ideology would be important if only because he documents this facet of recent history. But his analysis of neoconservative thought also alerts us to a significant aspect of our political life.

The first notes of the new conservatism began to be heard toward the end of the last decade in the *Public Interest* and the conspicuous emergence of today's rightist *Commentary*. Although it is in part a reaction to the New Left, the roots of the new conservatism, as Steinfels points out, go back to the '50s and such notions as "the end of ideology." One of its prophets, Irving Kristol, was also a leading light of "hard" anti-Communism, a position Steinfels labels as one type of reaction to the rethinking of politics by the left in the wake of Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism. In addition to prominent neoconservatives once identified with the left (e.g., Nathan Glazer's confession to a "mild radicalism"), there are others, such as Robert Nisbet and Samuel Huntington, who have been unreconstructed conservatives since the end of World War II.

Steinfels summarizes the basic principles of neoconservative thought as the postulate that there is a "crisis of authority" in America and the West generally and, consequently, the "stability and legacy of Western civilization are threatened." It "is primarily a cultural crisis, a matter of values, morals, and manners . . . our convictions have gone slack, our morals loose, our manners corrupt." Behind the crisis and decline of authority is "the adversary culture" nourished by intellectuals who are the core of a "new class." The latter concept seems to function in neoconservative

thinking in much the same way that "the bourgeoisie" functions in vulgar Marxism: as both concept and curse.

Government is seen as a victim of "overload"; it has subverted its own authority because it has tried to do too much. The "excessive demands on government" are sparked by intellectuals who, ridden by guilt, back programs on behalf of an underclass composed largely of the undeserving poor.

Another fundamental belief is related to practical questions: the crisis requires action that supports the authority of government. This means, among other things, that the government should not undertake initiatives that "will fuel the fires of egalitarianism, be wasted on the intractable problems linked to the underclass, or increase the influence of the new class." Caution is called for, because not only are there limits to what government programs can achieve but because programs attempting to mitigate social evils produce devastating unanticipated consequences.

The final tenet of the neoconservative creed relates to international affairs. The world requires a strong, disciplined society, and the requisite unity can be attained by "renewed emphasis on the Communist threat and the Third World's rejection of liberal values." This last, of course, reflects the tempering of many of today's new conservatives in the fires of the Cold War. Their view of foreign policy, Steinfels notes, is intertwined with their perspectives on domestic politics: "The existence of an ideologically armed and intact elite is a crucial ingredient, and its role in resisting external pressure is only the reverse of its role in resisting internal disintegration."

Steinfels explores the elaboration and application of basic ideas in the work of Irving Kristol,

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Daniel Bell—representatives of the range of neoconservative thought and style.

Kristol is the kind of man who lives off ideas and, as such, the prototypical neoconservative ideologue. His pronouncements are characterized by a simplification of complex issues, an exaggeration of tone, and “the certainty with which they are advanced.” Add an ability to overlook facts that inconvenience an argument and one has the picture of a guru qualified to guide oil-company publicists through the thickets of political economy.

Moynihan possesses many of Kristol’s characteristics, though in a more elegant and self-serving form. His career bears witness to a studious attention to the main chance. Early in 1968 Moynihan wrote unflatteringly about the prospects of a Nixon administration; six months later he took a job with it. Perhaps the best way of understanding Moynihan, given the evidence of Steinfels’s loving dissection, is to see him as the contemporary incarnation of the rural Southern politician playing up to his constituency. Though often of another class, he represented himself as having the same social origins as his constituents. His speeches were a species of entertainment and opportunities for catharsis as he articulated the passions, prejudices, and fears of his listeners—he was a man of the people not afraid to give hell to the powers that be. Moynihan also fiddles with his biography; his origins are rather more middle-class than Hell’s Kitchen working-class. Although his rhetorical style is a far cry from that of a redneck politician snapping his galluses, its patina of intellectualism is just as carefully crafted to fit the sensibilities of his urban constituents.

Daniel Bell is different. He is more knowledgeable about a wider range of affairs and a more disciplined thinker. If, as Steinfels claims, a major function of neoconservative thought is to raise “fundamental questions which do not promise to be resolved in the near future,” Bell’s capacity for analytical thinking is more likely to help clarify issues than either Kristol’s apocalyptic alarms or Moynihan’s posturing.

WHILE CONCEDED the value of Steinfels’s work, one reviewer concluded that he overrates the importance of the new conservatives. But that assessment is too optimistic; it overlooks the continuing attractiveness of conservative ideologies in a liberal society.

Steinfels justifies his enterprise by suggesting that political thought is now moving in two

directions: on the one hand, democratic socialists are reaching “beyond liberalism in order to fulfill its promises” and, on the other, there are the new conservatives “who feel they must reach beyond liberalism to preserve its heritage.”

This preservation of the liberal heritage means in practice defending the existing social structure against fundamental change. It can be an embarrassing position in a society whose political traditions are liberal; that is, a society founded on the premise of extending freedom and equality. The difficulty is overcome by an ideology that does not disavow liberalism but claims to be defending it; the neoconservatives support liberal principles but conservative action. They are not opposed, for example, to the principle that government must use its power, as it did during the New Deal, to cope with problems that cannot be solved by private enterprise. But neoconservatives are very much aware of the limited effectiveness of any government program; they are sensitive to the intricate complexities of public policy decisions; they are alert to the unintended consequences; and, above all, they know that not all problems are solvable. When such principles become guidelines to action, little action results; programs that aim at the structural sources of problems are automatically suspect. On the other hand, there is no basis for the accusation that reforms are rejected simply as a mindless defense of privilege.

A further point: ambiguity and uncertainty are prevalent in a society that takes seriously basic freedoms. In a democracy, all beliefs are open to question. When people are free to pursue their interests in the political arena, there is less certainty that those who now wield influence and power will continue to do so. No political system, obviously, can wholly eliminate challenges to deeply held beliefs and guarantee the survival of a power structure. But a liberalism that promotes freedom of thought and encourages participation in politics makes it easier to challenge the dominant groups and belief systems. Thus, an ideology that by way of reaction emphasizes the value of limits on freedom promises relief from the stresses liberalism entails. Liberalism, in short, promotes a certain ambivalence about its own basic values; it produces, if you wish, its own antithesis.

Ambivalence tends to make people vulnerable to attacks, like that of Michael Novak’s, on “the cultural nihilism” of intellectuals who oppose “the traditional values of honesty, decency, hard work, competitive advancement, religious faith, compassion for suffering and social cooperation.” When

Huntington in a Trilateral Commission report maintains that "some of the problems of governance in the United States today stem from an excess of democracy. . . . Needed instead is a greater degree of moderation in democracy," many will be inclined to listen sympathetically. "Problems of governance" underline a liberal society's disorderliness, which in turn creates a yearning for its opposite. In an earlier work, *The Soldier and the State*, Huntington contrasted the village of Highland Falls "with its lack of common unity and purpose" to the "ordered serenity" of nearby West Point where "the parts do not exist on their own, but accept their subordination to the whole." Can one deny, he concluded, that "the disciplined order of West Point has more to offer than the garish individualism of Main Street?" "Ordered serenity" can be a very attractive vision for those struggling with the ambiguities, the general messiness, of life in a democratic society.

NEOCONSERVATISM RECEIVES A BOOST from the circumstances of our times. Our experience of a stagnant economy, inflation, unemployment, and oil shortages tends to nurture a pervasive mean-spiritedness. The Proposition 13 tax revolt that cuts public services crucial to the lives of the less well-off is only one instance of a general reluctance to support programs mitigating the effects of poverty and inequality. Steinfels discusses the neoconservative reaction to John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, which argues that inequalities must be justified in terms of their consequences for the disadvantaged. Neoconservatives strongly resist this principle. They defend meritocracy on the traditional grounds that inequality is simply the outcome of superior individual virtue rather than class location. As taxes rise and real income declines, this argument becomes more attractive to those who are now in advantaged positions; it provides a rationale for ignoring poverty and inequality.

The apprehensiveness resulting from the play of uncontrolled economic forces is reinforced by such specific government policies as affirmative action. Even in a period of rapid economic growth, affirmative action was not a popular policy, and now as the job market shrinks it comes to be seen as a threat. The neoconservative opposition to it attracts those who have a head start in the scramble for jobs, since it justifies their advantage in the name of liberal principles. That the argument is not a *wholly* meretricious one adds to its strength. But its appeal does not really lie in intellectual cogency

or moral validity; rather, it is embraced for its practical utility in defending a market superiority.

It would be a mistake to see this as purely the operation of naked self-interest. Affirmative action is linked to the civil rights and feminist movements, which represent fundamental shifts in the position of minorities and women. Those who were once unambiguously subordinate now reject their inferior status assignments. The political disorder and turbulence these movements create extend to the private sphere of life where the conflict between new and old values heightens the ambivalence endemic to a liberal society. Add to this other sources of discontent: our anger at the mugger and rapist combines with an exasperation with graffiti, the "adult bookstore" and pornographic movie, the blaring suitcase radio, and the more strident voices of feminists and cultural nationalists of all kinds.

In these circumstances the neoconservative sourness about feminism and complaints about the crisis of authority and morals find sympathetic echoes. We become more receptive to comments on the "excesses of democracy," and more open to seduction by the picture of order that will emerge

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM IN EUROPE?/
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from the moderation of democracy and everyone knowing her own place.

American life today has a rasping, irritating quality that exacerbates the problems of living with the strains of political liberalism and a malfunctioning economy. There is a sense of trouble, a vague apprehensiveness, currents of unhappiness that neoconservative thought can seize upon and give intellectual shape to. That it is a shallow and flawed way of thinking is not necessarily fatal, since the effectiveness of an ideology seldom rests on its intellectual quality. Rather, it rests on an ability to capture the attention and energies of people. Neoconservative thought is important precisely because of its potential for deflecting liberal society from its traditional goals and encouraging a belief that the ends of freedom, justice, and equality are not worth pursuing in the first place. □

Leo P. Ribuffo

B Minus

AMERICA REVISED: HISTORY SCHOOLBOOKS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, by Francis FitzGerald. Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown. 240 pp. \$9.95.

My minimal sense of kinship with the historical profession expands substantially whenever it is glibly attacked by journalists. *America Revised* provokes unprecedented solidarity with teachers of history at all levels. This lapse from detachment, frankly confessed, has advantages for a reviewer, if not for the author under review. Freed by candor from the necessity of sounding impartial, I can indulge in first-person narrative and speculate about Frances FitzGerald's frame of mind.

FitzGerald chronicles shifting fashions in social studies and history textbooks from early efforts to inculcate patriotism and white Protestant values to current flirtations with pluralism. The "new immigration" of the late 19th century initially enlarged sales without altering the basic message; to most educators, Jews and Catholics were in

greater need of exposure to Protestant values than were Protestants themselves. Nevertheless, influenced by progressive historians, books published between 1910 and 1930 were, in FitzGerald's view, a "good deal more diverse" than their predecessors. But World War II and the Cold War produced another batch of patriotic primers.

For almost two decades publishers promoted containment abroad and uniformity at home. Then they tried to adapt to the turbulent market of the 1960s. For the first time, FitzGerald writes, the United States appeared as a "multiracial society" and its diplomacy was distinguishable from "sacred revelation." Despite a reassertion of orthodoxy during the 1970s, a few textbooks now "ask real questions."

The concession comes grudgingly. *America Revised* is overwhelmingly a litany of complaint. According to FitzGerald, changes in the late 1960s revealed less insight than bewilderment or craving to profit from academic fads. Even relatively sophisticated texts still neglect urban affairs, corporate power, and intellectual history. And their dullness is "astonishing."

FITZGERALD'S SOUNDEST JUDGMENTS—that texts usually endorse capitalism, encourage chauvinism, slight ideas, and contain dreary prose—have been presented before, both in works she cites (Ruth Miller Elson's *Guardians of Tradition*) and in those she misses (Martin Mayer's *Social Studies in American Schools*). Thus *America Revised* is marked less by originality than by the author's anger. Indeed, FitzGerald condemns publishers for doing something and condemns them again when they stop. The belated inclusion of blacks and ethnics prompts her to wonder if the United States is "really like Yugoslavia." She objects both to cold-warrior diplomatic history and to sudden shifts to revisionism.

Such complaints, not necessarily illogical, are sometimes warranted. More important, they reveal FitzGerald's habit of giving textbooks less than their due. Because anger undermines her style as well as her judgment, *America Revised* rivals many texts in glibness, disorganization, preachiness, and naiveté.

Amid the jumble, FitzGerald's view of foreign policy emerges with relative clarity. Grateful that texts finally criticized containment, she nevertheless accuses them of remaining "distinctly conservative." Treatments of the Indochina War sought an impossible "compromise formula that would offend no one." Only students poring over primary

documents in "inquiry" texts might infer that the war polarized the United States.

Unlike many readers of *Dissent*, I concur in FitzGerald's revisionist approach to diplomatic history. I am not surprised, however, that texts during the late 1960s favored an impossible compromise in Vietnam since most Americans wanted the same thing. Nor is it remarkable that a country lacking socialist or left-liberal network commentators or nationally syndicated columnists produces few socialist or left-liberal textbooks. Yet it does produce some.

FitzGerald's major contribution is to show how publishers, unconcerned with scholarship, revise texts in order to accommodate pressure groups or state boards of selection. Nonetheless, she errs by concluding that texts "differ from one another not much more than one year's crop of Detroit sedans." Sophisticated narratives and collections of documents, varying in approach and ideology, occasionally get through. They are directed primarily at college students, but they can be, and are, taught in secondary schools as well.

Beyond the issue of bias, FitzGerald is cross with texts because their interpretations are "slippery." In the abstract, it is "hardly surprising" to her that modern perspectives filter into the eleventh grade. But she persistently expresses surprise. Fairly ordinary modifications seem "remarkable," "startling," even "shocking." During the 1950s, FitzGerald recalls, she and her classmates supposed that texts revealed the past as it actually was. Now, though intellectually convinced that hope for objectivity is "foolish," she still hankers, perhaps unconsciously, for permanent "truth."

This quest for certainty is not the only legacy from the 1950s. Many of FitzGerald's historical interpretations are of similar vintage. She seems to believe that competent research into domestic American history ceased with Richard Hofstadter's death. She repeats his mistaken notion, for instance, that a "reactionary, Catholic-hating, Jew-baiting strain" afflicted Populists more than Democrats and Republicans. At least a decade after most scholars, she discovers the "remarkable" fact that Northern writers during the early 1900s were racists who condemned Radical Reconstruction.

Somehow FitzGerald decided that progressivism was a "cultural revolution" seeking "not just to purge society of corruption but liberate it from dominion of the past—to put an end to respect for established tradition and to the Victorian culture of filial piety, authoritarianism, and class distinc-

tion." To use one of her locutions, the meaning here is not entirely clear. Luckily, more subtle and accurate summaries of the amorphous progressive "movement" are available in several texts that FitzGerald dislikes. *America Revised* contains many contradictions, but none greater than the author's claim to judge American history texts without bothering to learn much American history.

The book also exemplifies the "ahistoricism" against which FitzGerald preaches. In *Fire in the Lake*, her history of the United States in Vietnam, she usually explicated unfamiliar world views; here she parodies them. Grumbling that the geographer Jedidiah Morse "did not like foreigners at all," she declines to explain that his ethnocentrism was molded by Revolutionary ideology and the volatile rhetoric of the 1790s. Surely, inculcators of Protestant virtue are no less worthy of empathy than the likes of General Ky.

Furthermore, FitzGerald infers too much from literary evidence. Occasionally she wonders if students are influenced by their reading. More often she leaps from textbook prose to generalizations about American education. Nor does she appear to have observed many—or any—teachers and students using the books. *America Revised* lacks the feel for the classroom that enhances the educational journalism of Martin Mayer and Charles E. Silberman. It is as if FitzGerald had tried to unravel the Vietnam War by reading the *Congressional Record*.

In this case, moreover, FitzGerald is a hawk. Wasting little time on elementary or secondary "pedagogues," she attacks their mentors, "educationists" whose level of "anti-intellectualism" and "sheer mindlessness" is matched in "few" professions. Instead of mastering respectable disciplines, these professors at teachers' colleges invent educational gimmicks. To document their pernicious impact, FitzGerald ends by tracing the failure of educational reform.

The story begins with the 1893 report of the National Education Association Committee of Ten. According to FitzGerald, the Committee, chaired by President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, wanted schools to "train the mind." Within two decades, progressive "educationists" captured the NEA and, following John Dewey, preferred to liberate the child's personality or enhance his "democratic values." Their successors slighted intellect during the 1940s and 1950s in order to promote patriotism and "life adjustment."

FitzGerald says that critics since the late '50s have played variations on these themes and the

notes are still sour. "Academic reformers" ranging from Admiral Hyman G. Rickover to psychologist Jerome Bruner reiterated Eliot's call for intellectual excellence. Unfortunately the "new social studies" quickly decayed into "citizenship training." Progressive education produced two kinds of mutant progeny. Political radicals, represented in *America Revised* only by Jonathan Kozol, favored "relevant" courses in the *real* problems of democracy"; their antinomian kin, the "New Romantics," believed that reason threatened personal fulfillment. Finally, "cultural fundamentalists" explicitly demanded a curriculum dedicated to basic skills while implicitly discouraging critical thinking.

At her best, FitzGerald demolishes the conservative postulate that progressive education undermines literacy, allows jargon-mongering educators to damn themselves with their own words, and rightly warns against zealots who expect to remake the world by remaking the eighth grade. Tilting toward "academic reformers," however, she fails to see that Eliot as much as Dewey supported schooling for citizenship (though he sought a more docile citizen). She mistakenly assumes that most "political" critics of education in the 1960s endorsed cheap relevance. She is so furious with "New Romantics" that she cannot bear to name a single person who fits the category. A good "educationist" is a contradiction in terms. While her last chapter touches on important issues, FitzGerald remains too angry to think them through.

SEVERAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROBLEMS noted in *America Revised* are solved in the classroom by competent teachers. For instance, they can verbally supplement skimpy narratives in "inquiry" texts, discuss biases in all books, and assign additional reading by serious scholars. Simply by examining the Constitution or other classic statements in bland document books, they can teach good history, critical thinking, and the art of close reading. Or teachers can simply promote broad discussion.

Undoubtedly many teachers place excessive faith in crank educational nostrums and inadequate texts. Yet FitzGerald errs by accusing the whole profession of greater "mindlessness" than, say, law or journalism. Then too, she sometimes confuses intellectual playfulness with "anti-intellectualism." One text, for instance, asks readers what they would have done in 1942 as their Japanese-American friends were removed to

detention camps. Skillfully discussed, questions of this sort show students that history is not an abstraction "in the book," but something that can happen to them. FitzGerald, however, detects only a "pious" new version of civics.

This complaint fits into FitzGerald's broader indictment of schools for promoting "values" when they should teach "children how to think." Her position has a venerable ancestry, recent antecedents in the writings of Hofstadter, Rickover, and Arthur Bestor, and a characteristic blindspot. Whereas progressive educators face a slippery slope to "life adjustment," the apostles of intellect tend to forget that thinking is not a value-free enterprise. On the contrary, teaching "how to think" about Puritanism or foreign policy may challenge the basic beliefs of born-again Christians and young cold warriors.

Although FitzGerald is probably correct to conclude that "educationists" and "cultural fundamentalists" exaggerate student malleability, she slights the valid insight of progressive education that teachers encounter a "whole child"—and vice versa. Students react at least as much to an instructor's manner as to the subject matter; they can ignore books but remain vulnerable to the men and women who dispense grades and praise (or humiliation). To sustain her broad critique of education, FitzGerald needed to pay less attention to texts and more to what actually goes on in schools.

Teaching a largely captive audience "how to think" is especially problematical in a diverse, democratic society. Aware of the issue, FitzGerald nonetheless evades it to score easy points off boards of education that choose conservative texts or grant classroom time to Genesis along with Darwin. As libertarian shibboleths spread across the political spectrum, I remain convinced that the educational process can—and should—introduce young people to thoughts and feelings proscribed by parents and local communities. But teachers must be careful to shun demagoguery, beware of replacing one superstition with another, and recognize that ideas produce pain and conflict as well as access to a wider world. Specifically, a good history faculty must be pluralistic in the best sense, representing diverse ideologies, teaching styles, and conceptions of "how to think."

Unfortunately neither capable teachers nor improved texts are likely to overcome the absurd "usable pasts" disseminated during national celebrations (or countercelibrations), political campaigns, and television "docu-dramas."

FitzGerald sensibly warns against expecting “too much from schooling.” *America Revised* inadvertently supports the point: it is “remarkable” that a writer of her intelligence has produced such a bad book. Yet, more deeply affected than she was by 1960s educational criticism, I remain a generous grader. B-. □

Lloyd Harrington

A Fresh Look at a Pioneer

DANIEL DELEON: THE ODYSSEY OF AN AMERICAN MARXIST, by L. Glen Seretan. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 302 pp. \$14.00.

A fascinating thesis that Daniel DeLeon's immersion in the novels of Eugene Sue—many of which he translated into English—had left him deeply influenced by *The Wandering Jew*, a Sue novel he did translate, is explored in Glen Seretan's informed book on this contentious pioneer of American socialism. In the Sue context the *Wandering Jew* is pictured as less identified with his own people and more “as a champion of the proletariat against . . . its oppressors.” Add to this a highly critical attitude toward the Jesuits, which DeLeon shared with Sue, and a notion with some credibility emerges. Seretan earnestly sustains this theme in his interpretive biography, but not to the exclusion of a perceptive analysis of DeLeon's socialist theory.

Seretan believes that the young DeLeon felt “cursed” with a Jewish identity. Before the full impact of Zionism had given Jews something more than a religious orthodoxy to cling to, this was not an unusual reaction.

At the vulnerable age of fourteen DeLeon had been shipped off to Germany for his secondary-school education. Certainly, this change of environment could have meant a considerable shock to a Spanish-speaking boy, fresh from the Dutch island of Curaçao, who also had recently lost his father.

In these new circumstances, the young Sephardic

Jew would likely have found all too little to bind him to other Jews. More and more he came to identify himself as a Latin-American. Coming thus without Yiddish language or culture, this may very well have been an easier transition—but it was not necessarily one less damaging emotionally. DeLeon arrived in New York City at the age of twenty in 1872.

Decidedly an intellectual, DeLeon was somewhat later in his life to come under the spell of Marxism and to idolize an abstraction—the working class. Having, in the meantime, advocated “amalgamation” of Jews into the general society, he then proceeded to “merge” his own identity with that of the workers. Thereby, “a painful Jewish identity,” Seretan plausibly suggests, “would be submerged and lost in the more comprehensive and sustaining concept of the proletarian, its final interment awaiting only the ‘new day’ to follow.”

The idea that Daniel DeLeon suddenly awakened to politics in the mid-1880s, then found his way quickly through single-tax, the Bellamy tremor, and by 1890 into the Socialist Labor party is part of a mythology that Glen Seretan ably explores; he finds it, however, a great oversimplification. DeLeon's boyhood exposure to European nationalism has been cited—he briefly had admired Bismarck! Some further evidence in this direction is his involvement, upon arrival in America, as an associate editor, with a Cuban exiles' paper advocating independence for that lonely relic of Spanish colonialism. Later, as a lecturer in international law at Columbia, DeLeon joined the mugwumps and in 1884 campaigned for Grover Cleveland. His road to Marxism and the SLP, accordingly, had not in fact been rapid—he was thirty-eight years old in 1890.

For the most part, labor historians have failed to deal adequately with DeLeon. Far too readily have they accepted the judgment that Daniel DeLeon was rigid, doctrinaire, unyielding to the point of being utterly impossible, and as if all this were not enough, a loyal coterie of DeLeonists persisted over the decades in glorifying the very rigidities that appalled the critics.

Seretan wisely does not attempt to find the SLP leader free of the faults ascribed to him; he also produces evidence showing that DeLeon was not invariably rigid. Having chosen a life of largely self-imposed deprivation, DeLeon was uncomplaining, and able to joke about it. He could pass his pocket watch around a circle of acquaintances to see if they could discover a very remarkable quality it possessed: that it actually kept time . . . and cost 98

cents! Or, tongue in cheek, he could brag that he had the most effective burglar alarm system in existence, causing the would-be thief to die instantly of heart failure . . . at finding nothing but bare walls, home-made furniture, and tin spoons! This Daniel DeLeon, whose favorite American author was Artemus Ward and whose favorite recreation was sailing a small boat on Long Island Sound, is little known.

BUT DELEON HAD A PREOCCUPATION with unionism—a field in which he was to make few friends and many enemies. This, if anything, was his Achilles heel. After an unsuccessful attempt during the early 1890s to capture the declining Knights of Labor, DeLeon set up his own SLP-dominated Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. The “New Trade Unionism,” with which his name became associated, is retrospectively viewed as a militant form of industrial unionism. This is an anachronism; DeLeon’s unionism of *that* day was mainly concerned with changing society. It was only later, in his IWW days, that he became clearly the advocate of the industrial form of unionism. Indeed, contrary to widely held opinion, neither the Knights of Labor nor DeLeon’s doomed remnant in the STLA were industrial union organizations in the sense that the IWW, and later the CIO, were to become. In effect, Seretan says that it took Daniel DeLeon ten years to realize what Debs was up to in his American Railway Union of 1894!

The record of DeLeon’s conduct in his abortive effort to gain control of the Knights of Labor is one of Seretan’s major exhibits in proving that the SLP leader was far less rigid than commonly thought. In the political field he was busily denouncing populists and monetary reformers, but his compromises and deals with populist and reform-minded leaders of the Knights displayed what Glen Seretan justly describes as “pragmatism and shrewd political calculation.” A very good case is made in comparing behavior on one hand and proclaimed SLP policy on the other to indicate that the inelastic image we have of Daniel DeLeon is at odds with the shadow he cast in the Knights of Labor. To understand the DeLeon personality, therefore, it is necessary to realize that “a subordinate, though revealing, thread of pragmatism ran parallel to the hard line” in his thinking.

Chagrined at failure in the Knights, and equally discouraged by the failure of socialist efforts to win support in the AFL, DeLeon decided that work

within established labor organizations—all unions under the thumbs of “Labor Fakirs”—was fruitless. Thus he made his decision for an independent socialist unionism, correctly described and justly deplored as “dual unionism.” This ill-fated venture was soon to tear the SLP apart.

But again, from 1905 to 1908, DeLeon showed in his IWW period an ability to conciliate and compromise that, while ultimately unproductive, was at some variance with his unbending image. His crushing failure to achieve a working relationship with the IWW left him, in the opinion of many, a shattered man. Belatedly, DeLeon sought to mend American socialism’s broken fences. But the Socialist party, wracked by some syndicalist dissension in its own ranks, had little need for a further infusion of dissenters.

THE INSIGHTS OF DANIEL DELEON were sometimes brilliant. If he was a little slow to grasp the significance of the industrial union idea, he made up for it by lucid writing and eloquent advocacy on that theme during his IWW period. He saw most clearly by then that huge industrial combines were using a technology that would wipe out the older craft divisions, and thereby restrict craft unionism. It was his clear conclusion by 1904-05 that the key to the organization of workers was in the burgeoning industrial structure itself. It was only by the 1930s that the full impact of this insight was forced upon American labor under the prodding of the CIO.

He was prescient in seeing that an IWW that eschewed politics would isolate itself, court an atmosphere of conspiracy, and end as a hole-in-the-wall organization. DeLeon believed that the labor movement was “essentially a political movement,” and that its educational and agitational purposes should be openly proclaimed and democratically defended.

Like his contemporary, the historian Frederick Jackson Turner, Daniel DeLeon saw efforts to analyze the American scene complicated by “the flux of our population westward.” DeLeon’s frontier theory perceived a “skewed” capitalist development with “the odd phenomenon . . . visible . . . of families with members in all classes.” Population was anything but stagnant, while economic activity was frequently feverish. Under such conditions both wealth and the illusions of wealth militated against the growth of class consciousness. But apparently DeLeon was unable to come to terms with his frontier insight, for he did not incorporate it in any discernible way into his

social and political theory. Nor does he seem to have recognized that in the more frontierlike areas of the country the rival Socialist party, with its freer manner, related more ably to a diverse and variegated Americanism.

In union matters DeLeon lacked a worker's understanding of unionism's day-to-day role. Ultimately, he became the advocate of a very sophisticated syndicalism—a lawyer's version, perhaps. His clarity is best demonstrated in his often repeated warning that a socialist movement that found itself in office without a strong economic organization by its side would discover that the day of victory was also the day of defeat. But his attitude to labor was flawed; a revolutionary lawyer, DeLeon impatiently viewed unions as devices for changing society. The view that demands for day-to-day improvements in the workers' living standards are largely tactical devices to build strong unions of revolutionary intent is one that only radical intellectuals, divorced from the realities of the workplace, can harbor.

As time has demonstrated, union leaders who view wages and working conditions as secondary matters end up without members. Whatever his faults, however, when Daniel DeLeon died a seeming failure in 1914, he left behind insights into both socialism and American society; he is far less known than is warranted. □

Josephine Woll

A Gifted Satirist

IN PLAIN RUSSIAN, by Vladimir Voinovich. Translated by Richard Lourie. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. 300 pp. \$11.95.

"I know that I have the very uncomfortable habit of saying not what is advantageous at a given moment, but whatever I believe to be the truth. I never concealed what I think of literary servility, toadyism and coat changing. I have always thought and continue to think that such things are as

degrading for the writer as they are to the revolution." These words were written nearly 50 years ago, by the Soviet writer Evgeny Zamyatin, in a letter to Stalin requesting permission to leave the Soviet Union. Surprisingly, he got it. Vladimir Voinovich, the extraordinary Soviet satirist, suffers from Zamyatin's disease, if not his "cure." Voinovich, after publishing in the official Soviet press all through the '60s, was expelled from the Union of Writers in 1974, one week after Solzhenitsyn was deported. While two works of his have since been published in the West, with this collection making a third, he has been unable to publish anything new in his own country for the last 10 or 12 years: how he survives is anybody's guess.

Voinovich signed letters of protest in 1965, when Siniavsky and Daniel were tried, and again when Solzhenitsyn was attacked. In his two most recent works, *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin*, the story of a Schweik-like simpleton during World War II, and *The Ivankiad*, treating Voinovich's own attempts to secure an apartment, he creates devastatingly funny, and terrifyingly accurate, pictures of Soviet life. (Both came out in English in 1977.) Most of the stories of *In Plain Russian* predate *Chonkin* and *The Ivankiad*; one is a chapter originally intended for inclusion in *Chonkin*, and there is a series of autobiographical sketches dating from 1974. The publishers have included four of Voinovich's open letters from the mid-'70s, dealing with the politics of literature in the Soviet Union. The whole book is exceedingly well translated by Richard Lourie, who catches the pithiness and charm of Voinovich's Russian.

In nearly all the earlier stories, the main character has to make a decision, and his choice reflects his existing morality and indicates his future moral path. Voinovich is not alone in treating this theme: many other Soviet authors have examined the same issue, often in stories published inside Russia. The first piece, a novella entitled "What I Might Have Been," is narrated by a construction supervisor named Samokhin. He is ordered to turn over a building before it is finished, so that the Party may bestow it upon Komsomol members on the occasion of the anniversary of the Revolution. Originally published in *Novyi Mir* (then the leading liberal journal), the story focuses on Samokhin's dilemma. If he is honest and refuses to turn over the building until the doors fit, the railings are firmly welded, the leaks repaired, he will lose his promised promotion and be forced to

move on to another building site. He knows: he has refused before, moved on before; his prior refusals explain why he is still, at 42, only a senior construction supervisor and not a chief engineer.

Voinovich paints a bleak picture of the forces contending with Samokhin's seemingly simple desire to work honestly. In order to get hold of some linseed oil, he compiles a list of what each of his fellow supervisors has on hand and needs—so that if he can swap the tiles he has for the window frames Ermoshin has, he can then swap the window frames for roofing iron, and roofing iron for his oil. As he says, with his pleasant, muted sarcasm: "A complete strategic plan. And all for one barrel of linseed oil."

Two things save us from despair as we read "What I Might Have Been": the petty, often comic triumphs of individuals over the system, and the personality of Samokhin. The first is more important than it may seem, for though the triumphs are almost pathetically minor (outwitting cops sent to sniff out illicit vodka, obtaining hard-to-get supplies, sneaking a game of chess during a meeting), they are nonetheless triumphs. Yet they have their dark side. One of the most blighting aspects of life in the Soviet Union is not merely that it is necessary to muster great amounts of energy and cleverness in order to overcome unnecessary obstacles, but that the satisfaction derived from such successes will obscure the fact that the obstacles really are unnecessary. A Soviet biochemist I met in 1975 then worked full-time in a lab, and on weekends fixed and painted apartments to make some extra money. Three years later, when I saw him again, he had stopped working in the lab altogether, and was fixing apartments full-time.



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With amused pride he explained how he had made the system work for him: on paper, he was still employed at the lab. His boss included him in work rosters and quota fulfillments. But his boss collected his salary, thus earning an extra 130 rubles a month. My friend was happy to turn his salary over to his boss, since he made over 1,000 rubles a month as a handyman. He had created a whole network of people who stood to gain: he, his lab boss, the factory workers from whom he bought paint (stolen from the plant), the helpers he hired, and his customers who would otherwise have to put their names on a list and wait months for the state to find them a repairman. Ignoring the stupidity and illegality of the whole business was far simpler than attempting to change anything.

Samokhin, at his own risk, does attempt to change things. He persists in acting as if things are as they are said to be. He deprecates his own integrity, and he is as capable of deluding himself as anyone else, but he can also rise above the petty satisfaction of beating the system and actually challenge its underlying falseness.

IN "A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS," the chapter withheld from *Chonkin* and here included, Voinovich shows the extreme consequences of total corruption. The "friends" of the title are Stalin's colleagues—Beria, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, et al., under the transparent aliases of Aria, Borshchev, Vershilov, etc. They have gathered to spend the night of June 21, 1941, with Stalin. Much like Solzhenitsyn's chapters about Stalin in *The First Circle*, this story shows the craven fear and obscene pandering to which Russia's demigods were reduced. Puppets, they jerk to Stalin's strings and mouth the words he gives them. His stupidity, his paranoia, his crudeness are refracted in their obsequiousness. As Hitler's troops pour across the border and Comrade Koba (Stalin's revolutionary nickname) sleeps for ten days, Voinovich's icy scorn freezes us into a rictus of horrified laughter.

For Voinovich—in the honorable tradition of Russian literature that extends from Gogol to Dostoevsky to Zoshchenko to Siniavsky—is a moralist. His morality is a traditional one, a combination of the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments. He sees people whole, treating any soul still salvageable with compassion and tenderness, if often ironic tenderness, and his scorn devolves more upon the sin than the sinner—though certain sinners, as "A Circle of Friends" attests, incarnate their sins. In the letter Voinovich sent to the Writers' Union the day before his expulsion he said: "We have nothing to discuss and nothing to argue about, because I express my own opinions while you say what you are told." □

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Theodore Draper

Kissinger's Apologia

In the first pages of the first volume of his memoirs, Henry Kissinger remarks with some bitterness about the way he was treated by McGeorge Bundy, his dean at Harvard and a predecessor as National Security Adviser to the President. It was "with a combination of politeness and subconscious condescension that upper-class Bostonians reserve for people of, by New England standards, exotic backgrounds and excessively personal style." By any standards, Kissinger's book is also exotic and excessively, if understandably, personal. It is numbingly long and stupefyingly detailed. It runs on and on for almost 1,500 pages; it needs over 400 pages to get through the first year of his service in 1969 alone. It is largely a chronicle of events, with set pieces on famous and infamous people whom he met or worked with, bits and pieces of potted history, and scatterings of familiar reflections and ruminations to leaven the lump. The main narrative pushes on relentlessly, often week by week or day by day and sometimes even hour by hour. Since this volume ends in 1972, we must be resigned to another volume and about 3,000 pages before Kissinger tells all. Dean Acheson, who served longer and participated in much greater history-shaking events, needed only one volume and a quarter as many pages to tell his entire story.

In at least one respect, the book is, by any previous standards, exotic. I know of no diplomatic memoirs that are so undiplomatically indiscreet. Some of Kissinger's pen portraits of colleagues in his own government, including the president under whom he served, can only be described as scathing. His frequently savage denigrations

are scarcely alleviated by his habit of following them with a few kind words, as if to take the sting out of them or protect himself from the accusation of unmitigated malice. A typical exhibition of this technique of wounding and salving is his comparatively friendly treatment of former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird. Laird was often "Byzantine" in his political maneuvers; his good humor was often "rascally"; he was the "probable source" of any newspaper story he complained about; he could be "maddening"; he was a "master-leaker of trivialities." But Laird was also "magnificent—strong, loyal, daring and eloquent" in crises. One gets the impression that Laird was not a man one would want to buy the proverbial second-hand car from. And the Secretary of Defense comes out relatively untarnished compared with the President and Secretary of State who, besides Kissinger himself, are the key figures in the drama that slowly but inexorably unfolds.

The drama began when Richard Nixon unexpectedly invited Kissinger to become his Assistant for National Security Affairs in November 1968. I happened to exchange some words with Kissinger at a conference in Princeton that same week. Kissinger was still dazed by the appointment. I wondered aloud how long he would hold his new job. Kissinger said that he would be lucky to hold it for six months. I was not the only one to whom he spoke at this time in this vein. I tried to be more optimistic—he would not come out too badly if he held on to it for a year. No one who had known him in previous years (my own acquaintanceship with him went back to 1944 in the 84th Infantry Division) could have

predicted that he would long survive in Washington's political jungle. Yet he not only survived; he managed, without any political constituency, by sheer force of intellect and personality, to outlast the President whose native habitat was in the darkest recesses of that jungle. He was appointed Secretary of State four years later by a jealous Nixon who already resented his subordinate's disproportionate share of credit for the conduct of foreign policy, which was Nixon's special pride and exclusive prerogative. Kissinger largely succeeded in extricating himself from the Nixon administration's disgrace and downfall. Nixon's successor, Gerald Ford, even found it necessary as almost his first order of business to announce Kissinger's retention to restore some confidence in the shaky new presidency.

Considering where he came from and how far he had to go, Kissinger's feat in Washington was an authentic *tour de force*. The same must be said of his memoirs, whatever opinion one may have of his ideas and policies. His book conveys much of the brute force, the intellectual virtuosity, and the insatiable appetite for power that enabled him to come out on the top, only slightly soiled, of a political dunghill. It is not for the average reader; I can sympathize with those reviewers who have dealt with it impressionistically; it would require another book to do justice to it substantively. Yet its very flaws contribute to its ultimate impressiveness—the inexhaustible self-absorption, the endless assault of detail, the craving for vindication. One thing is certain—no one who wishes to think or write about the world events of the 1970s can ignore it.

How did Kissinger do it? More of the answer than was previously accessible comes out, consciously or not, in these pages. The more he tells us about his triumphs and travails, the more disquieting they become.

The necessary condition for Kissinger's rise was an odd couple—Richard Nixon and William Rogers.

Kissinger's Nixon is a study in political pathology. There were, according to Kissinger, two Nixons—the one that functioned or malfunctioned most of the time in periods of relative stability, the other one that acted spasmodically when confronted by a crisis or critical decision.

The first Nixon was “weird” in his administrative approach. “He was almost physically unable to confront people who disagreed with him; and he shunned persuading people or inspiring his subordinates.” He made decisions “inside his self-imposed cocoon.” He saw himself as “the lonely embattled leader propping up faltering associates.” Yet he distrusted his associates so intensely that he worked to tear them down. Obsessed by past resentments and suspicions of betrayal, he lived in a self-induced ambience of ubiquitous enemies. He resented and suspected most of all the members of his Cabinet and the bureaucracies that served them. At the same time he was incapable of giving direct orders to or imposing discipline on even his Cabinet. He was “petty in calm periods” and “small-minded in dealing with his associates.” He was rancorous and vindictive—more so in victory than in defeat. The preoccupation of his White House with public relations was “monomaniacal.” Nixon had such an uncontrollable tendency to give impetuous and irresponsible orders that he depended on his subordinates, Kissinger in foreign and H. R. Haldeman in domestic policy, to save him from himself by disregarding his instructions until he had cooled off. He dreaded meeting new people. In negotiations, which he tried desperately to avoid, “he was nervous to the point of anxiety.” He sought refuge, in dealing with foreign leaders, in laboriously memorized memoranda or escape into “general observations.” His skill at avoiding unpleasant subjects was “finely-honed.” He was so insecure that he constantly needed “reassurance” from the few persons close to him. He could be “maddening” in calm times.

Kissinger enjoys showing Nixon at his crassest. One story, with which Kissinger must have regaled countless dinner parties,

has Nixon planning to go straight from a memorial Mass for Charles de Gaulle at Notre Dame Cathedral to the gastronomic pleasures of the restaurant Maxim's, a "mind-boggling" *faux pas* from which Kissinger rescued him. On another occasion, Nixon thought it appropriate to congratulate the Shah of Iran by citing one of former President Eisenhower's profundities to the effect that all successful political leaders had in common marriages "above themselves." Kissinger ends this tale with the punch line: "The King of Kings looked off into the distance with melancholy." Kissinger's president was surely, in Kissinger's words, a "flawed" and "strange" man. Has anyone who ever worked for a president described him in these terms? Exotic is one word for it.

The second Nixon emerged only in times of crisis or during the need for critical decisions. Kissinger gives him the saving grace of being able to make "lonely decisions" that were "extremely courageous" and demonstrated his "strategic grasp." Nixon was, to be sure, "not by nature courageous," but he "steered himself to conspicuous acts of rare courage." The attribute of courage in crisis is the highest and almost the only praise that Kissinger bestows on Nixon, sometimes to take the sting out of his less admirable traits. Nixon in his own memoirs treats Kissinger much more gently, a gentlemanly restraint that he may now sorely regret.

Kissinger's Rogers is a study in political sadomasochism. The sadism was Nixon's, the masochism Rogers's. Kissinger says that Nixon told him at their first meeting before his appointment that he regarded Rogers as the "ideal man" for Secretary of State, for one reason because Rogers was unfamiliar with foreign affairs, for another because Rogers was "one of the toughest, most cold-eyed, self-centered, and ambitious men" Nixon had ever met. At that preliminary meeting, according to Nixon's memoirs, Kissinger advised him to build up a "national security apparatus" in the White House to coordinate foreign and defense policies and develop "policy options." Since Nixon planned in any case "to direct foreign policy from the White House," this

recommendation suited both of them—Nixon to have a foreign-policy "apparatus" at his immediate disposal, Kissinger to be its coordinator and developer. Nixon's appointment of Kissinger was something of a fluke. He hardly knew Kissinger, but one of the things he says he knew was that Kissinger had made "disparaging comments" about him—a mild version of what Kissinger used to say about Nixon. Nevertheless, Nixon was sufficiently impressed by a single encounter with Kissinger to decide on the spur of the moment to offer him the post of National Security Adviser "in an uncharacteristically impulsive way." One of the things that must have endeared Kissinger to Nixon was the former's immediate advice to make the White House itself the headquarters of a foreign-policy and defense "apparatus."

Other presidents have appointed weak secretaries of state in order to direct their own foreign policy. But there has never been a case as shameful and indecent as that of Nixon's treatment of his old, "personal friend," William Rogers. In his memoirs, Nixon added indignity to injury by calling Rogers "a strong administrator" and "a resourceful negotiator." Rogers was given to administer a single area of policy, and that only for a time. If he was as tough, cold-eyed, self-centered, and ambitious as Nixon described him before Rogers took office, then Nixon deliberately set out to humiliate him.

The bone Nixon was originally willing to throw to Rogers was Middle Eastern policy. He chose this one, according to Kissinger, for thoroughly malicious reasons. If everything else was reserved for the White House, Rogers had to be given something with which to occupy himself. At the same time, however, Nixon believed that any active policy in the Middle East was then doomed to failure and to stir up domestic hostility against anyone identified with it. The ill-fated Rogers Plan, of December 1969, which Nixon says he knew all the time had no chance of being accepted by Israel and which made Rogers, "as Kissinger frequently reminded me, 'the most unpopular man in Israel,'" exactly suited what Nixon had in mind for Rogers.

Otherwise, Rogers and the State Department were deliberately and systematically deprived of every other area or policy that traditionally pertained to them. This move was initiated by Nixon almost immediately in February 1969 with respect to Soviet-American negotiations. Kissinger's and Nixon's divergent explanations of how it was accomplished show each of them retrospectively making the other responsible. Kissinger explains that Nixon "wished to establish his dominance over negotiations with the Soviet Union" and, therefore, "required the exclusion of Rogers, who might be too anxious and who might claim credit for whatever progress might be made"—this before Rogers was even given a chance to show what "a resourceful negotiator" he was. Nixon, on the other hand, relates that "Kissinger had suggested that we develop a private channel between Dobrynin and him"—and Nixon agreed. In any case, Rogers was left out of the first meeting between Nixon and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. Rogers must have sensed what was happening because much of a weekend was spent, Kissinger says, "fighting off Rogers's pleas—basically not unjustified"—to attend. At this meeting, Nixon set up privately with Dobrynin the first of the notorious "back channels" that effectively cut the State Department out of Soviet-American policy and made it the monopoly of the White House, which, in practice, meant Kissinger and his "apparatus."

GRADUALLY, the maw of Kissinger's "back channel" swallowed up one area, issue, and policy after another. After the Soviet connection came SALT, the strategic arms limitation talks. The Vietnamese negotiations followed suit. China was next. If Kissinger had had his way, according to Nixon, Rogers and the State Department would not even have been permitted to gnaw away at the bare bone of the Middle East. Kissinger "bridled" at Nixon's assignment of all Middle Eastern problems to Rogers in 1969 and 1970 and tried to get them for himself too. By 1970, relations between Kissinger and Rogers had deteriorated to such an extent that, Kissinger

says, the two of them could not engage in a "rational discussion." By the end of that year, Nixon almost automatically approved Kissinger's "tactical management of foreign policy" on a day-by-day basis, though the President still reserved for himself the ultimate decisions, especially in a crisis. By 1971, Kissinger succeeded in adding Middle East diplomacy to his laurels, leaving Rogers totally naked of responsibility for foreign policy and not even knowing most of the time what was going on. After 1971, Kissinger could not recall a single occasion when Nixon made any change in a negotiation once Kissinger had set it in motion.

This system led to situations that would be ludicrous if the consequences had not been so serious. Time after time, the President, Kissinger reveals, lied to his Secretary of State and, on occasion, to his Secretary of Defense as well. He lied to cover up decisions he had made months earlier without their knowledge. He lied to Rogers about Kissinger's first trip to China in 1971. He again lied to Rogers about Kissinger's trip to Moscow in 1972. He lied to both the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State about the number of American troops to be withdrawn from South Vietnam. Nixon even asked Soviet leader Brezhnev's cooperation to deceive Rogers.

The secrecy and duplicity with which Nixon, assisted by Kissinger, conducted foreign policy inevitably resulted in tragicomic confusion and cross-purposes. The American SALT negotiator, Gerard C. Smith, was more than once put in the humiliating position of bargaining with Soviet representatives without knowing what Kissinger had already agreed to. In 1971, Kissinger managed three negotiations in three months, and in all of these, as he put it, "the regular bureaucracy had not participated, indeed, was unaware" of their very existence. In one of them U.S. Ambassador in Bonn Kenneth Rush followed Kissinger's orders "without the knowledge of his own State Department." During the India-Pakistan crisis of 1971, White House and State Department representatives "dealt with each other as competing sovereign entities, not

members of the same team, and the President sought to have his way by an indirection that compounded the internal stresses of our government." In December 1971, we are told, neither the Secretary of State nor the Secretary of Defense nor anyone from their departments was permitted to attend a "crucial meeting, where, as it turned out, the first decision to risk war in the triangular Soviet-Chinese-American relationship was taken."

This Nixonian practice was not merely "weird"; it was a gross perversion of the American system of government. Kissinger observed and lent himself to it; he relates the circumstances with no more than an occasional expression of wonderment about how odd the whole procedure was. "Weird" is hardly the word for it; it was diseased. The disease permeates Kissinger's pages and contaminated all who came in contact with it.

We can now begin to get the answer to the question: How did Kissinger do it?

But first, there is another related question: Why did Richard Nixon subject his old, "personal friend," Bill Rogers, to such humiliation and degradation? Kissinger volunteers an explanation that must be seen to be believed.

During the 1950s, Kissinger relates, Rogers was the "psychologically dominant partner" in the friendship with Nixon. Memory of his formerly dominant role may have reinforced Rogers's alleged "tendency" to disagree with Nixon and to refuse to do battle for him "at critical junctures." This background leads into Kissinger's extraordinary interpretation of the pathological relationship between the President and Secretary of State:

In consequence he [Rogers] could not really grasp that in the new relationship his was the clearly subordinate position. Even less could he face the proposition that he might have been appointed, at least in part, because his old friend wanted to reverse roles and establish a relationship in which both hierarchically and

substantively he, Nixon, called the tune for once.

In fact, Kissinger notes, Nixon started on this course immediately—the day after his inauguration—before Rogers had had a chance to show any evidence of the "tendency" ascribed to him. In Kissinger's own narrative, Rogers took all the indignities heaped on him for over two years without fighting back. Kissinger absolves himself by carefully noting that Nixon began to exclude Rogers from all important negotiations "at a time when it would have been inconceivable for me to suggest such a procedure." Very little then is left of the idea that Rogers brought his debasement on himself by failing to recognize that he was no longer the dominant partner or did not grasp his subordinate position. Moreover, even on Kissinger's showing, Rogers was not always wrong. He was admittedly right in January 1971 to protest against using South Vietnamese forces for an offensive in Laos.

The first stage of Kissinger's rise had little to do with his abilities, his nuances, or his concepts. It was made possible by Nixon's need to reduce Rogers to a figurehead. That done, Nixon had to fill the vacuum with someone else. Only Kissinger could benefit. As Kissinger himself recognizes: "This curious antiphonal relationship between the two men had the consequence of enhancing my position, but my own role was clearly a result of that relationship and not the cause of it." Nixon's vengefulness was Kissinger's opportunity.

Kissinger does not hide the fact that he took full advantage of the opportunity. After describing Nixon's administration as "an array of baronies presided over by feudal lords" beset by the zealous retainers of a central authority, Kissinger admits that he "became the beneficiary of this state of affairs." In the first phase, he explains: "Ironically, one reason why the President entrusted me with so much responsibility and so many missions was because I was more under his control than his Cabinet." As for Nixon's strategy of using him against Rogers,

Kissinger acknowledges: "I do not mean to suggest that I resisted Nixon's conduct toward his senior Cabinet officer. From the first my presence made it technically possible and after a time I undoubtedly encouraged it."

Some presidents with weak secretaries of state have taken on much of the diplomatic burden themselves. But Nixon was unwilling or unable to be his own secretary of state. As Kissinger portrays him, he had no mind for the kind of diligent effort required for developing or enforcing policy. He was, for example, "bored to distraction" by the technical arguments put forward by different departments on the SALT negotiations. "His glazed expression," Kissinger reports, "showed that he considered most of the arguments esoteric rubbish; he was trying to calculate the political impact and salability of the various options, of which only the broad outlines interested him." Beyond the "broad outlines" and most often before they were set, Kissinger took over. Except for the Middle East, and even that only until 1971, "Nixon would listen to the agencies for a while and then act from the White House; thus my office assumed constantly growing responsibilities."

Rogers was not the only victim of this eerie practice. Nixon also dealt with the other Cabinet members, except for former Secretary of the Treasury John Connally, through White House assistants. This system did not conform to the "bureaucratic politics model," which presupposes that official policy and action largely result from "bargaining" by different "players" in the government. In the triangle, Nixon-Kissinger-Rogers, the last was hardly a player at all; he was, in important matters, not even a spectator; he simply did not know what was going on. The appearance of division in high councils, Kissinger observes, makes White House politics "not so different from life at royal courts." The analogy with royal courts fits Nixon's administration better than any other "model" and is particularly apt for Kissinger's place in it. Initially, at least, he derived his power wholly from the favor of a miscreant lord in the White House.

THIS SETUP INEVITABLY resulted in a vicious feud between Kissinger and Rogers. Pride supposedly prevented Rogers from admitting to himself that his old friend, the President, deliberately made many important decisions when the Secretary of State was off on foreign trips. Yet Kissinger adds that Rogers was not totally wrong to blame him.

Nixon distrusted State and wanted sensitive matters handled by the White House alone, but my presence made the two channel procedures possible and I was quite willing to step into the breach to conduct negotiations with my small staff and no interagency liaison. The procedures so painful to Rogers were clearly instigated by Nixon; it is equally evident that I nurtured them.

Nixon's version of this feud is characteristic of the man. He blandly remarks that no human organization could be free of personality and policy conflicts, such as those that took place among Rogers, Kissinger, and Laird. One might imagine from Nixon's account that Rogers and Kissinger just happened to hold low opinions of one another: "Rogers felt that Kissinger was Machiavellian, deceitful, egotistical, arrogant, and insulting. Kissinger felt that Rogers was vain, uninformed, unable to keep a secret, and hopelessly dominated by the State Department bureaucracy." These are the harshest words that Nixon puts in his book about Kissinger and Rogers, still playing them off against one another, as if he were not personally culpable and had not stacked the cards in favor of Kissinger. Nixon also adds this tidbit not found in Kissinger's book: "Kissinger suggested repeatedly that he might have to resign unless Rogers was restrained or replaced."

Ironically, Kissinger's subsequent tenure as Secretary of State made Rogers's ordeal at his hands a dangerous precedent. Kissinger protected himself by holding onto the post of National Security Adviser as well as that of Secretary of State, preventing anyone else from doing to him what he had done to Rogers. Since it would be unseemly for a

Secretary of State to seem to accept Rogers's punishment as a model, Kissinger's memoirs are studded with *mea culpas* about the way he behaved and Rogers was treated. "Though I did not think so at the time," Kissinger writes, as if he had finally seen the light, "I have become convinced that a President should make the Secretary of State his principal adviser and use the national security adviser primarily as a senior administrator and coordinator to make certain that each significant point of view is heard."

At the time, however, Kissinger pretended that his role as National Security Adviser conformed to the latter specifications rather than, as he now reveals, to those of the President's principal foreign-policy adviser and operational head. When Kissinger tells of Ambassador Rush's instructions to act on Kissinger's orders without the knowledge of his own State Department, he comments guiltily: "It was an odd way to run a government." In another connection, Kissinger magnanimously places the responsibility for conditions that put State Department officials "in an extremely uncomfortable position" on "the personalities at the top, including myself." Moreover, the "personality clashes" between Kissinger and Rogers "did neither of us any credit." Still later, Kissinger apportions praise and blame for Nixon's method of government in this way—the President's "complex personality" contributed the "impetus" but "I, as the organizer of these procedures and their driving force, must, of course, share the responsibility for the shortcomings" as well as "perhaps undue credit for the successes." Even when Kissinger claims that Nixon's procedures "worked" in practice, he now professes to believe that they should not be repeated.

KISSINGER'S REFERENCE, becomingly modest, to the "perhaps undue credit" foisted upon him takes us to the second stage of his rising star. In late 1971, Kissinger became acutely aware of a change in Nixon's attitude. On his return from his first trip to China in October, Kissinger saw signs that "the President was becoming restive at the publicity I was

receiving." By now he knew Nixon and his minions, Haldeman, Erlichman, and Ziegler, well enough to realize that his disembarkation at a remote corner of Andrews Air Force Base, "inaccessible to newsmen and photographers," was no accident. As Kissinger puts it plaintively, "it was not a heroic homecoming."

Nixon subsequently found other opportunities to teach Kissinger "a lesson in the limits of my authority." During the Vietnam negotiations in 1972, Kissinger virtually defied Nixon's wishes and substituted his own judgment for that of the President on how to deal with the North Vietnamese. Whoever was right, Presidential assistants are not supposed to be so headstrong and even insubordinate. Kissinger refers to his "solitary procedures," another way of saying that he went off on his own and confronted Nixon with accomplished facts. In return, the White House took pains "to distance itself" from Kissinger because the President "was bound to become restless with an Assistant who was beginning to compete with him for public attention." Nixon became so "restless" that at one time he would not see Kissinger for several weeks. When *Time* magazine chose both of them as Men of the Year, Kissinger knew that Nixon would not be pleased and even tried unsuccessfully to remove his name. Not surprisingly, "Nixon's brooding disquietude with my new-found celebrity inevitably transmitted itself to his staff, only too eager to build him up and relishing the bonus of cutting me down to size after years of riding high."

In the second stage of Kissinger's meteoric career, then, Nixon replaced Rogers as the main rival. Nixon, according to Kissinger, first saw him as a "surrogate," then as a "competitor for public attention." That a presidential assistant—whose only strength, Kissinger tells us, is "the President's confidence"—could hold his own in such a competition makes one wonder about the power of the imperial presidency. Presidents have had competition from Cabinet members, whom they had to get rid of, but this must be the first time that a

president has had so much competition from a mere assistant, whom, in addition, he did not even dare to dismiss.

What made Kissinger do it? He drops a hint, though it is supposed to apply to someone else. "In contemporary America," Kissinger observes with reference to Nixon, "power increasingly gravitates to those with an almost obsessive desire to win it."

Most of the reviews of Kissinger's book I have seen have been so impressionistic that they suggest how difficult it was for the reviewers to deal with it substantively. Even with more space at one's disposal it is impossible to do justice to all of Kissinger's themes—Chile, the Middle East, nuclear strategy, Cambodia, India-Pakistan, China, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam. I have chosen to limit myself to the last three in order to deal with these subjects more thoroughly than would otherwise be possible.

The "opening to China" by Nixon and Kissinger may well be their most important, enduring contribution. It was overdue, but that is no reason for taking credit away from them. In his book, Kissinger generously gives Nixon the main share of that credit, without neglecting to mention that he had come independently to the same judgment about China and designed many of the moves in that direction. Kissinger also makes clear that neither Nixon nor he took office with more than a nebulous idea about how to go about inaugurating a new China policy. The first move was made by the Chinese immediately after Nixon's election. Both sides maneuvered warily for another year before it was clear that they were going to make a serious effort to reach an understanding, and it took another year and a half to reach one.

The main question that arises is what Kissinger understood by a Chinese-American accord. Kissinger has some trouble making up his mind.

Back in July 1968, when he was still working to make Nelson Rockefeller the next president, Kissinger had written into one of Rockefeller's speeches the idea of engaging in

a dialogue with Communist China in order to form "a subtle triangle of relations between Washington, Peking, and Moscow." It was—and is—one of Kissinger's conceits that such moves could be "subtle," as if no one were quite so clever as he is. This "triangular theory" suggested that China, Soviet Russia, and the United States were more or less equivalent power centers, each of which could try to play off one of the others against the third. Kissinger himself must have had some such arrangement in mind when he told Theodore H. White in November 1972 that "what the world needed was a self-regulating mechanism," the key to which was China.¹ If there were such a thing as a "self-regulating mechanism" in world affairs, this one would have to be based on the assumption that the Washington-Peking-Moscow triangle was all that really mattered and that the three powers were so nearly matched in strength that one could not overcome a second without the aid of the third.

In this book, Kissinger recalls his triangular theory of 1968 with the following explanation:

Our relations to possible opponents should be such, I considered, that our options toward both of them should be greater than their options toward each other. If we could free our diplomacy from the dead weight of two decades, each Communist superpower would have greater inducement to deal with us constructively.

This diplomatic recipe is a good example of Kissinger's occasional weakness for abstract formulas that get lost in muddled verbiage. Does "our options toward both of them" mean our options toward both of them together or toward each of them singly? It cannot mean the first, because they were no longer together; once the split between them occurred we had options toward each of them separately, not both at once. But the real trouble is in the second sentence. It betrays Kissinger's intermittent yearning to have the

¹ Theodore H. White, *The Making of the Presidency 1972* (New York: Bantam edition, 1972), p. xviii.

best of all possible worlds. The facts of life, demonstrated abundantly in every day's newspaper, are that the closer we get to one of the Communist superpowers, the less likely the other is to "deal with us constructively." In practice, the more one of them deals with us "constructively," the more apt is the other to deal with us "destructively." We cannot have it both ways. This sort of spurious profundity cannot stand close examination.

The muddle gets progressively worse as Kissinger repeatedly tries to explain the new China policy.

On the one hand, Kissinger tells us that he belonged to the *Realpolitiker* school of thought, which argued that the Soviets were more likely to be conciliatory if they feared an American policy of rapprochement with China; it also urged that the United States should expand its contacts with China "as a means of leverage against the Soviet Union." With respect to Soviet-American negotiations in 1970, the China initiative gave the United States "an ace in the hole." On the Chinese side, he once told Nixon, "Washington was being brought into play as a counterweight to Soviet pressures." In briefings, Kissinger favored China over Soviet Russia because the former was the weaker party.

This interpretation can only mean that the United States and China were using each other, as well they might, against the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, Kissinger pushes a more conciliatory, benign line with respect to both Communist powers. The move toward China, he explains, was intended to shape a new "global equilibrium" to give the United States a "balancing position" to improve relations with both the Soviet Union and China. He also makes getting "the two Communist powers competing for good relations with us" the essence of the triangular strategy, as if the United States could shift from hostility to benevolence in its China policy without incurring the increased hostility of the Soviet Union.

This line of thought lands Kissinger in a flagrant contradiction. On page 763, he explains:

Neither Peking nor Moscow was quarreling with the other to curry favor with us; they were currying favor with us because they were quarreling. We could not "exploit" that rivalry; it exploited itself.

According to this interpretation, the United States did not and could not make the Soviet Union and China into rival, quarreling powers, though it is less clear why we could not exploit that rivalry whether or not it exploited itself, whatever that may mean.

But on page 1076, Kissinger tells the reader who may have forgotten what he had been told some 300 pages earlier:

If we appeared irresolute or leaning toward Moscow, Peking would be driven to accommodation with the Soviet Union. If we adopted the Chinese attitude, however, we might not even help Peking; we might, in fact, tempt a Soviet preemptive attack on China and thus be faced with decisions of enormous danger.

Here, what we do becomes most instrumental in determining the relationship between Peking and Moscow. *We* can drive China into the hands of Russia or provoke Russia into attacking China. What has happened to the Sino-Soviet hostility that had, on page 763, "followed its own dynamic"?

This kind of inconsistency haunts Kissinger's interpretation of the new China policy. He wishes to make it, as might be expected, an achievement of world-shaking significance. It betokened "a geopolitical revolution," "a new international order." But he also pronounces: "The China card was not ours to play."² If it was not ours to play, what in the world were we playing with in Peking?

² In an interview in the *Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 1980, Kissinger reiterated: "Well, I have always objected to the concept of the China card. I do not feel happy with the notion that we use China to annoy the Soviets as a penalty for Soviet conduct." His reasons were that the Soviets may not react rationally and that the Chinese may think that we might downgrade them if we improve our relations with the Soviet Union. This reasoning makes it appear that if we call our rapprochement with China something other than a "card," it will make the Soviets less likely to react irrationally or China less nervous about improved Soviet-American relations. As a political theorist, Kissinger sometimes betrays a peculiar propensity to substitute words for realities, as if a "China X" would be in reality so different from a "China card."

And if the United States did not have a China card to play, must we conclude that China did not have an American card to play either?

Kissinger's play is with words, not with cards. The question is what kind of China card we are playing with, not whether it is a card at all. There are cards and cards, some more valuable than others. What is the real difference between regarding China as "a means of leverage," "an ace in the hole," and a "card"? Reality does not change just because, or solely because, of a change of terms.

Something else is at stake here. The troublesome problem is a legacy of the triangular theory. The triangle of China, Soviet Russia, and the United States is not made up of equivalent sides. China does not threaten the Soviet Union anywhere as much as the Soviet Union threatens China. The Chinese have extremely limited military capabilities outside their own borders; the Soviets have vastly greater external capabilities. Much as the Chinese stick in the Russian craw and force the Russians to keep about 45 divisions on the Chinese border, China represents much less of a deterrent to Russia on a world scale than the triangular theory would lead one to expect. It is not to denigrate the desirability of a Chinese-American understanding to recognize that the United States can potentially be more useful to China than China can be to the United States. So long as the Soviet armed forces are gigantic enough to permit a buildup on all fronts, including the Chinese, the Russians can enjoy maximum freedom of action. In most parts of the world, they have to worry much more about what the United States will do than what the Chinese will do.

The Chinese-American rapprochement was and is a good thing in its own right. It has considerable, but limited, effect on the Soviet-American relationship. It is a "card," but it is not "an ace in the hole," whereas Kissinger thinks it is "an ace in the hole" without being a "card."

The least candid, most untrustworthy portion of Kissinger's book deals with the Soviet Union and the policy of detente.

Until 1969, when he went to Washington, Kissinger held very severe and consistent positions on both. In brief, he was anti-Soviet and anti-detente. He was anti-Soviet in the sense that he considered the Soviet Union to be the most dangerous, most implacable enemy of the United States and all that it stood for. He was anti-detente because he viewed it as an insidious Soviet tactic to lull and gull the West in preparation for the next period of Communist expansion. He pursued these themes with sophistication and tenacity for about a dozen years before he was called on to do something about them.³

How could someone with this background become converted to detente, and how does he explain it now?

The first surprise is the type of relationship that Kissinger soon established with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin. It can only be described as the coziest and chummiest imaginable. Few foreign ambassadors in American history have ever benefited so much from such close rapport and bonhomie. I do not mean to suggest that Kissinger and Dobrynin should have been at verbal swords' points, whatever the relations of their countries may have been. But what actually passed between these two went far beyond a civil working diplomatic association. Dobrynin was Kissinger's first "back channel," which sent the latter on his way to effective operational control of American foreign policy. He has rewarded Dobrynin with such fervent, effusive praise that it should stand the Soviet Ambassador in good stead for promotion in the Soviet hierarchy. Only one other person—Prime Minister Chou En-lai of China, who is written about with gushing veneration—gets higher marks from Kissinger. Despite Dobrynin's long service in Washington over almost two decades through every *Sturm und Drang*, despite "his unquestioning support of the Soviet line," Kissinger virtually nominates him for a future Nobel Peace Prize: "If someday there should come about the genuine

³ Interested readers may follow Kissinger's pre-1969 views in greater detail in my article in *Commentary*, June 1974.

relaxation of tensions and dangers which our period demands, Anatoly Dobrynin will have made a central contribution to it.”

One can understand Kissinger's admiration for “a thoroughgoing professional” who “moved through the upper echelons of Washington with consummate skill” and whose “skill at putting his American interlocutor on the defensive was infinite.” Such a Soviet operator might be considered more effective, slippery, and dangerous than any other, to be handled with the greatest care. Instead, Dobrynin was permitted to enjoy confidences and take liberties that he was never expected to reciprocate. After an important meeting between the Chinese and American ambassadors in Warsaw in January 1970, for example, Kissinger matter-of-factly records: “The day after the Warsaw meeting Dobrynin appeared at my office, seeking a briefing, undeterred by the fact that this was a favor Moscow never vouchsafed to us on any topic.” Kissinger did not express surprise or administer a rebuke at such a question; he merely “evaded his request.” Dobrynin would not have dared to ask the question at all if he and Kissinger had not had other such *tête-à-têtes*.

This “back channel” was more than a mutual admiration society; it was also a political commitment.

As Kissinger told Oriana Fallaci in the interview he now recalls with acute pain, he had set out to achieve three things: peace in Vietnam, rapprochement with China, and “a new relationship with the Soviet Union.” That new relationship was consecrated in 1972 with the official sanctification of the policy of detente. The new relationship with the Soviet Union was the political side of his personal relationship with Dobrynin.

Kissinger invested so heavily in Soviet good will because he believed that Soviet cooperation was needed to solve the most acute foreign problems confronting the United States. Necessity was only one step away from availability, if “vested interests” could be

created linking both sides.⁴ His theory of “linkage” was, therefore, critical for the success of this program. As Kissinger saw it, a Soviet-American understanding could not be based on a single issue, even one so important as arms control; a relaxation of tension had to encompass all outstanding issues. The Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy aimed at achieving nothing less than “fundamental settlements” through “an integrating conceptual framework.” Though Kissinger had long detested detente and had even distrusted it when France and Germany had embraced it, he was converted to it by 1971. The summit meeting

Moscow in May 1972 made it “the integrating conceptual framework” without which, he insists, it is impossible to conduct a serious and fruitful foreign policy.

The summit meeting of May 1972, therefore, was not content with the first strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT I). The linkage to other outstanding issues came in another key document—the “Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” It contained 12 basic principles that, in effect, tied the arms agreement, according to Kissinger, to “an agreed code of international conduct”—the code of detente. It was or should have been, in Kissinger's scheme, far more important than the arms agreement, which was in itself a highly problematic first installment. If either side broke the code, the whole point of an arms agreement was lost; and if the code prevailed, an arms agreement could be a welcome but unessential factor in keeping the peace.

Kissinger is apparently so embarrassed by his role in the codification of detente that his book comes close to distorting the record. He reduces his interest in the principles of detente to the merely “tactical,” designed to intensify Soviet dilemmas, reduce Soviet influence in the Middle East, and “outmaneuver the ‘peace’ pressures” at home. If one took this *ex post facto* rationalization seriously, detente was a weapon of the Kissingerian cold war, not a process of conciliation.

The real story of detente, SALT I, and the “Basic Principles” cannot be found in these

⁴ Kissinger's theory of “vested interests” was put forward by him on May 29, 1972 (*Department of State Bulletin*, June 26, 1972, p. 884).

pages. Detente stood or fell on the "Basic Principles," as Kissinger himself had previously interpreted them:

They state that both sides will attempt to their utmost to avoid military confrontation and that neither will attempt to take unilateral advantage in situations, recognizing that the great nuclear powers cannot be pushed in a position that jeopardizes their basic survival without noting it and therefore recognizing that the attempt of traditional diplomacy to accumulate marginal advantages is bound to lead to disastrous consequences in the nuclear age.⁵

With one exception, this paraphrase closely followed the text of the "Basic Principles."⁶ The exception was the theory of "marginal advantages." As Kissinger subsequently developed it, the theory held that the balance of power no longer fully applied in the nuclear age. Kissinger explained:

The reason is that the determination of national power has changed fundamentally in the nuclear age. Throughout history, the primary concern of most national leaders has been to accumulate geopolitical and military power. It would have seemed inconceivable even a generation ago that such power once gained could not be translated directly into advantage over one's opponent. But now both we and the Soviet Union have begun to find that each increment of power does not necessarily represent an increment of usable political strength.⁷

The last sentence implied that the Americans and the Soviets had been moving toward a meeting of minds on the obsolescence of "marginal advantages" and "increments of power." If the Kissingerian theory was valid, there was nothing to worry

about; even if the Soviets violated the understanding and grabbed for marginal advantages and increments of power, they could not be translated into "usable political strength." Logically, the "Basic Principles" merely spelled out the theory of marginal advantages; the principles were not even needed if the theory operated as postulated.⁸

THE READER of *White House Years* will not get a word about marginal advantages or increments of power, even though they played such a large part in Kissinger's thinking in the years of detente. Instead, he offers a version of detente that differs little from the familiar carrot-and-stick policy of "posing risks and incentives to encourage Soviet restraint." If that were all there had been to Kissinger's detente theory, he could hardly have been accused of originality. What made his version distinctive was that he gave it a theoretical foundation that made detente seem structurally sound and even built into the nature of the new international order. All this has mysteriously disappeared from a memoir that

⁸ Kissinger was not always fully consistent. On the occasion of signing the principles, he stated: "Of course, these principles have to be implemented. If there is bad faith on either side, the aspirations expressed here cannot be realized. Speaking for our side, I can say we will attempt to implement these principles in the spirit in which they were promulgated. We have no reason to suppose that this will not be done by the leaders of the Soviet Union, but if events should prove these hopes on either side to be incorrect, then we will, of course, both of us, have to draw the appropriate conclusions" (Ibid., June 26, 1972, p. 885). According to the theory of marginal advantages, however, neither side would gain any increment of usable political strength even if it failed to implement the principles.

The theory of marginal advantages was also written into the President's foreign policy report to Congress of May 3, 1973. It took the position that a certain balance of power was still inherent in any international system, but that it was no longer "the overriding concept" because continual maneuvering for marginal advantages in the nuclear era had become "both unrealistic and dangerous." Why? Because "both sides possess such enormous power, small additional increments cannot be translated into tangible advantages or even usable political strength. And it is dangerous because attempts to seek tactical gains might lead to confrontations which could be catastrophic." But if the tactical gains were sure to be wasteful, why should they lead to catastrophic confrontations? "Unrealistic" maneuvering should be more dangerous to the interests of the maneuverer than to anyone else.

⁵ *Department of State Bulletin*, June 26, 1972, p. 885.

⁶ The second principle read in part: "The USA and the USSR attach major importance to preventing the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of their relations. Therefore, they will do their utmost to avoid military confrontations and to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war." It also stated: "Both sides recognize that efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly, are inconsistent with these objectives." The third principle committed both powers "to everything in their power so that conflicts or situations will not arise which would serve to increase international tensions."

⁷ *Department of State Bulletin*, July 10, 1972, p. 40.

otherwise goes into the minutest of details.

Unfortunately for Kissinger's theory of marginal advantages, the Soviets were not converted to it. They showed their disrespect for his "integrating conceptual framework" by sending their Cuban proxies into Angola toward the end of 1975. If Kissinger had been right, the Soviets should have realized that a mere increment of power in such a faraway African country could not give them any "usable political strength." In that case, since the Soviet leaders were supposed to be so innately cautious and patient, they would have considered the Angolan intervention a waste of time and substance. Instead, Kissinger was converted to the Soviet point of view: he suddenly woke up to how usable this marginal advantage could be to the Soviets. Beginning in January 1976, he began to change his line somewhere between 90 and 180 degrees. He was apparently not prepared for such a change and for this reason may have reacted with unusual outrage. As late as April 1975, he had expressed the opinion that he expected the Soviet Union to move toward making relations with the United States better, not worse.⁹

The Angolan intervention brought out the new Kissinger, who remarkably resembled the old, pre-Nixon, Kissinger. In the first months of 1976, Kissinger announced the beginning of a new era—that "the U.S.S.R. has begun to define its interests and objectives in global terms"—as if the U.S.S.R.'s interest in Cuba since 1960, to go back no further, had been less global than its interest in Angola. He reincarnated the old doctrine of "containment" in so many words—"It is our responsibility to contain Soviet power without global war. . . ." He restored the balance of power to its traditional position of primacy in world politics. He saw a single marginal advantage or increment of power, not as the waste of effort that it had been in the previous theory, but as encouragement to seek

further marginal advantages and increments of power—"If adventurism is allowed to succeed in local crises—an ominous precedent of wider consequence is set." He served notice that "cooperative relations" with the Soviet Union—he would have said "detente" if the term had not become politically taboo—could not "survive any more Angolas." Kissinger's strange Soviet interlude was over.¹⁰

We have gone beyond the bounds of *White House Years*, which ends at the beginning of 1973. The book cannot be understood solely in terms of its own period; it was written by the born-again, anti-Soviet, post-1976 Kissinger and reflects many of his latter-day preoccupations. One result is suppression of all evidence of his responsibility for the illusions of detente. This silence is the most deafening confession he could have made. He admits to some minor errors of judgment; he cannot bring himself to mention a major one.

Kissinger has, more recently, called for a policy that "must be pursued over an indefinite period of time."¹¹ Kissinger's own Soviet policy would have done better if he had followed this advice.

Of all the subjects in his book, Kissinger dwells at greatest length and with most pathos on the Vietnam war. In the end, I am sure, it will far outweigh in importance anything else with which he had to deal.

One way to judge Kissinger's policy is to subject it to the test of his own guiding ideas or concepts. He has repeatedly put forward two, though not always with the same emphasis. They may, in his own words, be referred to as "nuances" and "geopolitics." He sometimes relies on one, sometimes on the other, without ever making clear how they fit together.

"Nuances" are just about the smallest change one can use in diplomacy. The dictionary says that nuance means: "A slight or delicate variation or difference in expression, feeling, opinion, etc." The important

⁹ "I think the relationship has had a setback. It has had a period of stagnation. I have the impression that the Soviet Union is now fairly anxious to pick it up again" (Interview with Pierre Salinger in *L'Express*, Paris, April 12, 1975).

¹⁰ San Francisco, February 3, 1976; Laramie, Wyoming, February 4, 1976; Boston, March 11, 1976.

¹¹ *Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 1980.

thing is that it should be slight or subtle. Such variations or differences do not by their very nature alter anything of substance or something of the essence. No serious or experienced negotiator would be taken in by them. Yet Kissinger has always given them a place of inordinate importance in his scheme of things. He has gone so far as to hold that nuances are all that really matter. On one occasion, he said: "The difference between great policy and mediocre policy or substantial policy and average policy is usually an accumulation of nuances."¹² He has maintained that "intangibles" can determine the outcome of events.¹³

In this book, nuances again get co-star billing. One sentence reads: "I wanted to accumulate nuances for a long-range strategy." Now, there may be nuances in the way a long-range strategy is expressed, for expression is the chief function of nuances, but no accumulation of nuances can add up to a long-range strategy. Another example of muddled verbiage makes "nuances and interrelations" the test of foreign policy. By "interrelations," Kissinger explains, he means the "linkage" of events. In this passage, an accumulation of nuances is no longer enough to make up a long-range strategy or, as Kissinger also calls it, "an integrating conceptual framework." In any case, nuances and interrelations are not of similar or comparable status. Interrelations may be given this nuance or that, but the nuance is still bound to make no more than a slight or subtle difference to the interrelations. Only a dimwit would be won over to any interrelation because of the nuance given to it. Moreover, neither of them nor both together can do what Kissinger here asks them to do—satisfy the need for "an integrating conceptual framework." By themselves, nuances and interrelations beg the question; they need an integrating conceptual framework to give them function and direction. It is not enough

to expound, as Kissinger does here, on the need for an integrating conceptual framework and then make it nothing more than a mix of nuances and interrelations in the abstract. Here, as elsewhere, there is much less in Kissinger's theorizing than meets the eye.

Despite his long infatuation with nuances, Kissinger in this book leans most heavily on "geopolitics." He defines the difference between Secretary of State Rogers and himself in terms of Rogers's "tactical" perspective and his own "strategic and geopolitical" approach. Again and again, he uses the term "geopolitical" as if it were his personal revelation or trademark. The United States, he laments, has "no geopolitical tradition."¹⁴ For a word that is made to do so much work, however, Kissinger makes very little effort to explain just what should be understood by it. His one attempt is quite inadequate and even misleading: "By 'geopolitical' I mean an approach that pays attention to the requirements of equilibrium." It hardly helps to substitute an even more general and elusive term, "equilibrium," for "geopolitical." Geopolitics since Sir Halford Mackinder's time early in this century has always been based on a single factor—geography—as the determinant of history. Equilibrium has no such concrete, clear-cut connotation. The mere reference to equilibrium does not tell us whether it is geopolitically sound or not. Traditionally, geopolitics has had more to do

¹² Interview, *New York Times*, October 13, 1974.

¹³ "Statesmen must act, even when premises cannot be proved; they must decide, even when intangibles will determine the outcome" (Speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 17, 1975).

¹⁴ This is something of an exaggeration. A marked aspect of the work of Frederick Jackson Turner was geopolitical. As late as 1918, long after he had developed his "sectional" theory of American history, Turner "still thought in terms of geographic determinism, and he sought explanations for political and social behavior in physiographic pressures, rather than in the many forces responsible" (Ray Allen Billington, *Frederick Jackson Turner*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 372). A fully developed American geopolitical system appeared in 1942 with *America's Strategy in World Politics* by Professor Nicholas John Spykman of Yale University (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1942). One reason why geopolitics never came to dominate American political and historical thought is that, as Professor Hans J. Morgenthau once put it, "geopolitics is a pseudo-science," based on "the fallacy of the single factor" (*Politics Among Nations*, New York: Knopf, 2nd ed., 1955, p. 146).

with world mastery than with equilibrium.¹⁵ In any case, Kissinger cannot complain if we test his Vietnam policy by his own standards of nuances and geopolitics.

CURIOSLY, KISSINGER'S VIEW of the Vietnam war has never had anything to do with nuances or geopolitics. He came to his basic position on the war before going to the White House. He had given up the hope of military victory as early as 1966 after making two trips to Vietnam at the invitation of then Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge.¹⁶ It took him two more years to come forth with an alternative to military victory. In his article in *Foreign Affairs*, written in the summer of 1968, he implied that a wrongheaded geopolitical assessment had landed us in the Vietnam dilemma.

Unquestionably, the failure to analyze adequately the geopolitical importance of Vietnam then [in 1961-62] contributed to the current dilemma. But the commitment of five hundred thousand Americans has settled the issue of the importance of Vietnam. For what is involved now is confidence in American promises.

What was also involved, he went on, were "credibility," "prestige," and ending the war "honorably," above all the last. In effect, we were not in Vietnam as a result of geopolitical imperatives; we were there because, as

¹⁵ The father of modern geopolitics, Sir Halford Mackinder, saw Eastern Europe as the key to world power and, therefore, believed that Russia was the most probable victor in the coming struggle to dominate the world. The school of pre-World War II German geopoliticians, headed by General Karl Haushofer, held that it would be possible for Germany to gain the upper hand through an alliance with Russia or outright conquest of Eastern Europe. Professor Spykman did not expect any one dominant world power to come out of World War II; he foresaw three "autonomous zones" in the Far East, North America, and Europe, with China favored in the first, the United States in the second, and a difficult balancing act between Great Britain, Russia, and Germany in the third. Geopolitics tends to regard "space" as fundamental, and the power with the greatest amount of space at its command the most likely to expand and conquer. The geopolitical tradition has emphasized war through geographical expansion rather than peace through equilibrium.

¹⁶ *Look*, August 9, 1966.

¹⁷ *No More Vietnams?* Richard M. Pfeffer, ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) pp. 11-13.

Kissinger also said a month earlier in 1968, we had created our own difficulties through a series of military and political "conceptual failures."¹⁷ In a geopolitical perspective, it would have mattered little whether or not there were 500,000 Americans in Vietnam; the importance of Vietnam would have been settled by its geographical location. Whatever may be thought of Kissinger's argument that the 500,000 Americans settled the issue of the importance of Vietnam, geopolitics was involved only in the sense that they had been sent in defiance of geopolitical considerations.

Geopolitics is also no respecter of credibility, prestige, or honor. The geopolitical outlook is peculiarly hard-boiled and cold-blooded. It sweeps aside such vulnerable human sentiments as credibility, prestige, and honor. Its criterion is the conquest of space and power, whatever means may be necessary to achieve the goal. This is not to say that credibility, prestige, and honor are not important from some points of view; they are simply not geopolitical concepts; they are, in fact, as ungeopolitical or antigeopolitical as one can get.

In *White House Years*, Kissinger's position on Vietnam is essentially the same as that of 1968. For all his flaunting of geopolitics, his justification for what we were doing in Vietnam is primarily moralistic. His emphasis is on "our moral position," on avoiding "dishonor," on getting out "with dignity." The difference between the United States and South Vietnam in the later stages of the Paris negotiations was, he says, that "our goal was honor," their "problem was survival." Whatever one may think about this statement of the American goal, it belongs to a tradition of chivalry, not geopolitics.

Kissinger also has a more pragmatic rationale for the last four years of the American war in Vietnam—that "sacrificing our friends" would have shaken "the confidence of all who depended on us." He does not push this one as hard and as often as "honor," but it is worth considering whether there is anything to it.

Other people's "confidence" in the United

States transfers the stake in Vietnam to the world outside. It implicitly admits that there was nothing in Vietnam itself to justify the American role in the war. By shifting the attention away from Vietnam, it is of a piece with the idea that the presence of 500,000 American soldiers settled the issue of the importance of Vietnam. In both cases, a geopolitical aberration is said to create reasons for increasing the cost of the aberration. On this reasoning, one could never cut the losses inevitably incurred by a miscalculation of such magnitude.

Here, again, we face a general, abstract, psychological term—"confidence." Even if the confidence of our other dependents and allies were shaken, we could not judge how much this factor should influence American policy in Vietnam without asking: How much was it shaken? For how long? In relation to what other reasons for retaining confidence in the United States? What other options did these allies and dependents have, even in the worst of eventualities?

All we get from Kissinger is shaken "confidence," as if this were an absolute. The real problem of Vietnam was concrete and relative. What was the expenditure of men and material in Vietnam worth in relation to American interests, domestic and foreign, as a whole? On this question, Kissinger has some surprises in store for the reader.

European public opinion as represented by the media, he concedes, opposed the war; European leaders, though they did not say so publicly, "wanted the war ended quickly," but also "wanted America's credibility unimpaired." The discretion of European leaders is easily understood; nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that Europeans looked on with increasing distress and disbelief as the United States spent itself in eight years of a hopeless war on the other side of the globe. If those eight years were not enough to attest to America's "credibility" as a faithful ally, how many more would have been necessary? What in any case does "credibility" in this intangible and abstract form mean in these circumstances? It is one of those words, like "geopolitics," that is being used as a substitute

for thought and deserves to be put back in the dictionary for a rest.

If authority were needed to testify that the United States conducted its war in Vietnam at the expense of the rest of the world, two of the highest-ranking testimonials would come from President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger. In 1971, Nixon declared:

Now, in terms of our world situation, the tendency is, and this has been the case for the last five to six years, for us to obscure our vision almost totally of the world because of Vietnam.¹⁸

In this book, Kissinger relates that he told Thieu in 1972: "We have fought for four years, have mortgaged our whole foreign policy to the defense of one country."

In the same year, Kissinger received some sage advice from Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Ch'iao Kuan-hua, who presumably spoke with the approval of Kissinger's favorite statesman, Chou En-lai: "One should not lose the whole world just to gain South Vietnam."

It is in connection with China that Kissinger finally gets the geopolitical position of Vietnam straight. He writes: "The China initiative also restored perspective to our national policy. It reduced Indochina to its proper scale—a small peninsula on a major continent."

On that major continent, China is the geopolitical center of gravity. If China is permitted to develop its economic and military potential in coming decades, a geopolitician would presuppose that this small peninsula would be most likely to gravitate to the Chinese sphere of influence. In fact, the first American political theorist to work out a complete geopolitical system almost four decades ago assigned just such a role in the region to China.¹⁹

Still, Kissinger has given us some standards for judging his handling of the Vietnam negotiations. Did nuances matter or did geopolitics prevail? Was honor saved? Were

¹⁸ July 6, 1971 (in *Department of State Bulletin*, July 26, 1971, p. 93).

¹⁹ Spykman, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

our friends in Vietnam sacrificed or not? Could the settlement have restored the confidence of our allies and dependents in the world at large?

By far the longest and most anguished part of the book deals with the negotiations that brought an end to the American intervention in Vietnam. Even if the outlines were clear before, Kissinger adds so much to our intimate knowledge of the events that there is nothing like it in the entire literature on the war so far.

Nuances, Kissinger soon found out, had no effect whatever on the North Vietnamese. From the beginning they were inflexibly determined to get all American forces out of Vietnam and to overthrow the South Vietnamese regime headed by President Nguyen Van Thieu. The masters of nuance in the Paris negotiations were, according to Kissinger, the North Vietnamese, not the Americans. For example, the North Vietnamese negotiators proposed a "coalition government" for South Vietnam, but in such a way that, as Kissinger understood it, it would effectively give the North control. Kissinger complains that this ruse deceived "many unwary Americans"; no such American gimmick ever deceived many unwary Vietnamese.

My favorite Kissingerian nuance is still another. What separated everyone in the Nixon administration from its moderate critics, Kissinger claims, was "not a philosophy but a nuance." The "philosophy" in question was American withdrawal; the nuance was a "lingering hope that Hanoi might at some point negotiate, paying some price to accelerate our total withdrawal." That Kissinger should want to pass off not only himself, but everyone in the Nixon administration as secret doves, differing from other doves only slightly, by a nuance, would seem too farfetched to deserve serious consideration. Yet it is symptomatic of a deep strain that runs through the Vietnamese sections of the book—an "ambivalence," to which he confesses, and even a guilty conscience.

The "lingering hope" of "some price" to be paid by North Vietnam is thus made to justify four years of a futile and repulsive war. What was there to the hope? What was the price?

Kissinger had from the outset little or no hope that he could get any real concession from the North Vietnamese left to themselves. His hope originally rested on getting the Soviet Union to bail us out. His early strategy called for trading an improvement in Soviet-American relations for Soviet pressure on North Vietnam to make peace on acceptable terms.²⁰ Kissinger's proposed barter never had a chance. He even accepted with minimal protest the indignity of receiving no reply for months from Dobrynin, though no such letdowns seem to have spoiled their warm personal relationship.

What else was there to the lingering hope? There were, Kissinger points out, only two real choices—military escalation and Vietnamization. The former as a long-term strategy had been ruled out; it was, in any case, incompatible with the policy of piecemeal withdrawal. But the latter was equally unsatisfactory to Kissinger, who finally agreed to it with some reluctance. Yet, it is clear, he oscillated between these poles, never able to commit himself fully to either one. This equivocation more than anything else led to the interminably long, excruciatingly tortuous negotiations with North Vietnam and their disastrous denouement.

The heart of the matter was Vietnamization. It implied that the United States had become embroiled in a Vietnamese civil war, and that the only way to get out was to give the civil war back to the Vietnamese. The American problem from this point of view was less with North Vietnam than with South Vietnam. Even if the Nixon administration saw its duty as the preparation of South Vietnam for fighting its own battles, that preliminary period could not last forever. At some point it was necessary to make the Thieu

²⁰ "In all my conversations with Dobrynin I had stressed that a fundamental improvement in US-Soviet relations presupposed Soviet cooperation in settling the war [p. 266]. . . . But Hanoi would not move without some pressure. Therefore Soviet participation could become crucial [p. 267]."

regime in South Vietnam stand on its own and take the risk of defeat. The only other option, as Kissinger recognizes, was to resort to unlimited military escalation on the assumption that the war had to be won or lost by the United States. But Kissinger for one had ruled out such a perspective of American military victory years before.

Vietnamization did not have to be negotiated with North Vietnam. It was a means to get the United States out of the war, not to end the war between the Vietnamese. The United States could no more end the war between the Vietnamese by peaceful negotiation than by military force. Civil wars that go on as long and as ruthlessly as the one in Vietnam cannot be ended by a third party, which has paid so heavy a price for its interposition that it desperately seeks a way out. The negotiations in Paris, then, could not be about Vietnamization. They were undertaken to find a way to bring the war to an end and thereby save South Vietnam from the risks of Vietnamization.

We are now approaching the crucial point, which Kissinger does his best to obfuscate by hiding behind a screen of excess verbiage.

IN THE PARIS NEGOTIATIONS, Kissinger holds that one thing was not negotiable—the survival of the Thieu regime in South Vietnam. That was the affair of American honor, credibility, prestige. The negotiable issues were the conditions for American withdrawal, short of abandoning the Thieu regime to its own fate. But there was one hitch. Thieu himself, who knew best, believed that American withdrawal under any circumstances was tantamount to the abandonment of South Vietnam and his regime. He had never accepted Vietnamization, but he had played for time or had hidden his true feelings in such a way that even Kissinger was misled. Thieu had to be bludgeoned into going along with the final settlement in Paris; his resistance was so great that Kissinger calls it “almost maniacal.”²¹

²¹ “All his life, he too had known only war; his entire career had been based on American support. A world in which the South Vietnamese would have to stand entirely

What, then, made the settlement “honorable”? The entire case is essentially based on one point. Until the end of 1972, as Kissinger saw it, North Vietnam had always insisted that the United States should, directly or indirectly, abandon the Thieu regime and replace it with a North Vietnamese-controlled “coalition government.” Once this demand was withdrawn in October of that year, the way was open for a deal between the United States and North Vietnam, the former to withdraw all of its forces, the latter to leave its forces in South Vietnam in place. The “peace with honor” rested, in the last analysis, on the North Vietnamese concession that it was not necessary to overthrow the South Vietnamese government in advance as the price of a cease-fire. Once Thieu realized that the United States was determined, one way or another, to withdraw its forces from Vietnam, even threatening to make a separate peace, he capitulated to the inevitable.²²

But what if Thieu were right that his regime could not long survive the complete withdrawal of American forces? In that case, the withdrawal implicitly, if not explicitly,

on their own was full of terrors that his pride would not let him admit [p. 1320] We had no way of understanding the primeval hatred that animated the two sides [p. 1325] What was success for us—the withdrawal of American forces—was a nightmare for our allies; even with a cease-fire they simply could not imagine how they would be better off without us [p. 1372] The South Vietnamese, after eight years of American participation, simply did not feel ready to confront Hanoi without our direct participation. Their nightmare was not this or that clause but the fear of being left alone [p. 1375] We failed early enough to grasp that Thieu's real objection was not to the terms but the fact of any compromise. . . . And from his point of view Thieu was right [p. 1391] Peace involving American withdrawal was a traumatic event for the South Vietnamese. . . . That his [Thieu's] methods were obnoxiously Vietnamese, that in the process [of balking] he nearly wrecked our own internal cohesion, does not alter the reality that he fought valiantly, that he was right by his lights and the realities of what he knew of Hanoi's purposes [p. 1467].”

²² Nixon's version is characteristically disingenuous. First, he relates (as does Kissinger) that he sent a message on December 19 to Thieu about his “irrevocable intention to proceed, preferably with your cooperation, but, if necessary, alone.” Because Thieu made known that he had been faced with an ultimatum, which he had rejected, Nixon says that he was “shocked” and “I felt we would now be justified in breaking with him and making a separate peace with Hanoi”—as if he had not already threatened to make a separate peace.

sealed the fate of the South Vietnamese government. If American honor depended on the Thieu regime's survival, and that survival depended on continued, indefinite American military presence in South Vietnam, the Paris agreement of January 1973 was no more than a token offering to American honor and Thieu's survival. Kissinger himself virtually admits that the peace terms gave the South Vietnamese government only a theoretical, rather than a practical, chance to survive because it lacked the will to do so without direct American military support. The terms, he writes, gave South Vietnam the means to survive "theoretically." The reality was something else: "But they did not of themselves provide the sinews of confidence and cohesion in Saigon to maintain the equilibrium which had in fact been achieved on the battlefield." Kissinger's use of the term "equilibrium" is almost always elusive and never more so than here; an equilibrium that left North Vietnamese forces in possession of much of South Vietnam was hardly calculated to last very long.

By dropping its demand for the dismantling of the South Vietnamese regime in advance, North Vietnam did pay "some price" for the American withdrawal. But, as Kissinger spends pages assuring us, only the demand, not the determination, was dropped. The price was no more than a face-saving device; it could not have been more so long as the survival of the Thieu regime depended on the presence of American armed forces. The wonder is not that the North Vietnamese agreed to drop their demand; it is rather that they took so long to do so. Kissinger finally came to see that Thieu and Tho (Le Duc Tho, North Vietnam's main negotiator) were alike in their tactics and behavior; they were also akin in that they understood each other better than Kissinger understood either of them.²³

It is not altogether clear whether Nixon and

Kissinger were deceiving themselves or deceiving Thieu. The problem arises because of something that Kissinger says was "inconceivable" to him at the time. It was the idea that the United States could not conceivably fail in months or years to come to make good the private assurances given to Thieu by Nixon that failure by North Vietnam to abide by the terms of the agreement would bring "swift and severe retaliatory action" and a response "with full force" by the United States. McGeorge Bundy has sufficiently shown how inconceivable it is that Kissinger should have found this idea "inconceivable."²⁴ The more intriguing question is: Why did Kissinger find it so inconceivable?

The answer is, I believe, that he was moved by a confusion of motives and forces, some of which is still reflected in his book. He rejected victory by military escalation. But from time to time he was willing to resort to a "military showdown" and thought that "going for broke" militarily should be seriously considered. He protests that "in all conscience," we could not impose "an unacceptable peace on our ally" and then tells in the most agonizing detail how he helped to impose a peace that our ally considered to be unacceptable to the point of near hysteria and tears of rage. He makes the American engagement in Vietnam a struggle over a principle—"that America did not betray its friends"—and ended the war in such a way that its friends cried to high heaven that they had been betrayed. He was dead set against "a disguised form of victory" for North Vietnam, but that is what he eventually settled for. To avoid a disguised form of victory it was necessary, in his view, for the United States to "enforce" the agreement (which he mistakenly calls a "treaty"), as if a country that had found it politically impossible to maintain its forces in Vietnam could find it politically possible to send them back *en masse* to prevent a North Vietnamese takeover or, more realistically, to drive out the North Vietnamese after a takeover. He even makes a return of American forces to Vietnam inevitable or obligatory because North Vietnam's "single-minded quest for hegemony, we were certain,

²³ "Our constant search for some compromise formula illuminated the cultural gap between us and the Vietnamese because the very concept of compromise was alien to both Vietnamese parties. We had no way of understanding the primeval hatred that animated the two sides" (p. 1325).

²⁴ *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1979/80.

would continue after a settlement.” Despite this, he pretends or deludes himself that the resolution of the Vietnamese civil war could have been left “to the free decision of the people” or amenable to “a genuinely free political choice by the people.”

What has this jumble of inconsistencies, contradictions, vain hopes, and *non sequiturs* to do with the hard, cold doctrine of geopolitics?

The answer is that geopolitics had little or nothing to do with it. The real force that drove the United States out of Vietnam, Kissinger admits, was the popular American revulsion against the war. To obey the will of the people went against the grain; to resist it indefinitely was, however, impossible. The defense of “honor” and “prestige” could only permit a delaying, rearguard action. The decisive reason Nixon and Kissinger could not go along with Thieu to the bitter end was, as Kissinger puts it, that such a course “would have guaranteed the collapse of all remaining support at home.” After Nixon’s reelection in November 1972, “he was determined not to have his second term tormented like the first by our national trauma. . . .” One part of Kissinger, as he himself makes clear, sympathized with Thieu’s position; another part recognized that the United States was tearing itself apart socially and politically on Thieu’s behalf and could not go on doing so much longer. This duality more than anything else drives Kissinger into going over the ground of the Vietnam negotiations interminably, sometimes veering one way, sometimes another, never quite—I suspect—convincing himself or the reader.

In the end, American honor à la Kissinger could have been saved only if the United States had been able and willing to send back sufficient force to Vietnam to save Thieu from collapse in 1975. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Kissinger’s entire argument. If the U.S.-North Vietnam agreement of 1973

²⁵ “Thus, we can anticipate no lasting peace in the wake of a consummated agreement, but merely a shift in Hanoi’s modus operandi. We will probably have little chance of maintaining the agreement without evident hair-trigger U.S. readiness, which may in fact be challenged at any time, to enforce its provisions” (p. 1435).

could not be expected to last, it followed that the United States had to be ready to renew the war in Vietnam at any time, in months or years, at a moment’s notice—and Kissinger warned Nixon in advance that this was the logic of their course.²⁵ And why did the logic fail to work in practice? Kissinger’s answer is that all would have worked out as planned “but for the collapse of executive authority as a result of Watergate.” This can only mean, if it signifies anything more than a rhetorical last gasp, that the United States without Watergate would have “enforced” the Paris agreement by all means in its power, including the use of its own forces. Nothing else could have sufficed if, as we were already told, the real problem was that the American withdrawal caused the South Vietnamese to lose “the sinews of confidence and cohesion”—that, in effect, American forces had to carry the burden of the fighting as the *sine qua non* of the Thieu regime’s survival. Honor wasn’t saved. Dishonor, if it is understood to mean Thieu’s collapse, was merely delayed. A country that as a result of popular revulsion could not stay in Vietnam could not expect to get back, Watergate or no Watergate. As for geopolitics, it was a bad reason for staying in but one of the best reasons for getting out of Vietnam.

VIII

Finally, something more must be said about the question with which we started: How did Kissinger do it?

Unusual personal qualities undoubtedly had much to do with it. Energy, stamina, even “megalomania” made his extraordinary career possible. He managed to embody a singularly potent combination—a sense of mission with a streak of opportunism. His intellectual facility impressed and intimidated. Yet all these personal characteristics hardly account for the extravagant adulation that he inspired. His record was not such as to merit the overwrought acclaim it drew from the media. Perhaps his greatest feat was to beat the President’s media machine at its own machinations.

Kissinger has lots of fun with the frenzied

efforts of Haldeman and Ziegler to get “photo opportunities” for the President on the evening television shows. He recounts a “bizarre interlude” at, of all places, the Vatican; a “monumental traffic jam” deliberately staged in the center of Belgrade; the anxieties of Nixon’s advance men to get “exposure in prime television time” in China. But Nixon’s publicity hounds were no match for Kissinger. Midway through his memoirs, Kissinger modestly remarks that “I was supposed to be skillful in dealing with the press.” By the end, as previously noted, he had Nixon brooding about his “new found celebrity.” Lest readers miss all the nuances of his celebrity, Kissinger refers in the book’s notes to “a good account” of the mood in the White House in William Safire’s memoirs of his White House years. It tells of Haldeman’s belated realization that “superstar” Kissinger was the President’s chief competitor for the title of “ #1 Peacemaker.” Kissinger himself “cheerily professed to be a megalomaniac”; Safire cheerily offers the opinion that Kissinger was no more than a “realistic megalomaniac.” Kissinger’s approach to the media, according to Safire, was “selective and flattering,” and it drove the White House staffers nearly out of their minds with envy and rage.²⁶

Kissinger’s approach was different from that of Nixon’s retainers. They worried about getting the picture of their chieftain to the *hoi polloi* on television news shows. Kissinger cultivated the *haut monde* of Washington’s columnists and correspondents. The dean of the *New York Times* columnists sometimes wrote as if Kissinger had been dictating to him; he was even lured into deceiving his readers about Kissinger’s alleged opposition to the Christmas 1972 bombing of North Vietnam.²⁷ (Kissinger admits only to the fact

that he did nothing to counter the deception; it is “one of the episodes of my public life in which I take no great pride.”) Two of Kissinger’s hagiographers somehow managed to link him with George Washington; gave him credit for “humanizing” the Kremlin leaders for a whole generation of Americans; and paid him tribute for having “co-opted” many of his potential critics—including themselves, it may be added.²⁸ A usually sober British correspondent in Washington appointed him “the second most powerful man in America.”²⁹ Another writer, favored with some 25 interviews with Kissinger and two of his closest aides, went even further—he had Kissinger “in real measure running the world” during the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war.³⁰

Why did *they* do it? A full study of the way the usually disenchanted, hard-to-please Washington media mentality was wooed and won by Kissinger would be needed in order to get at the roots of this phenomenon. One factor should not be missed. Kissinger as an intellectual in politics captured the allegiance and excited the imagination of a journalistic elite that is itself largely made up of intellectuals *manqués*. By selecting them as his chosen confidants and flattering them with his assiduous attention, he made them feel closer to the seat of power than ever before. Nixon’s publicity peddlers tried to sell him from the bottom up; Kissinger sold himself from the top down. In the end, Kissinger’s power over the American media may explain more about how he did it than his power over anything else.

Postscript

I WISH TO CALL ATTENTION to an aspect of Kissinger’s book that concerns the use of classified documents and is nothing less than scandalous. The book contains literally scores of direct references to and textual quotations

²⁶ William Safire, *Before the Fall* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 666, 669-70.

²⁷ James Reston, *New York Times*, December 30, 1972.

²⁸ Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974), pp. 3 (“He has come to be recognized as the very portrait of American diplomacy, the way George Washington is identified with the dollar bill”), pp. 5, 544.

²⁹ Henry Brandon, *The Retreat of American Power* (New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 22.

³⁰ Edward R. F. Sheehan, *The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger* (New York: Readers’ Digest Press, 1976), p. 38.

from documents obviously of the highest classification. Some are only a sentence or two, some much longer.

I wondered how Kissinger could make use of classified documents on such a large scale and of such recent vintage. If they had been declassified for him, could I or any other scholar have access to them? Could one check up on how he used these documentary sources?

So I wrote a letter of enquiry to the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs of the State Department. I received a reply dated January 16, 1980 from Deputy Assistant Secretary for Classification and Declassification Clayton E. McManaway. The essential paragraph in his reply reads:

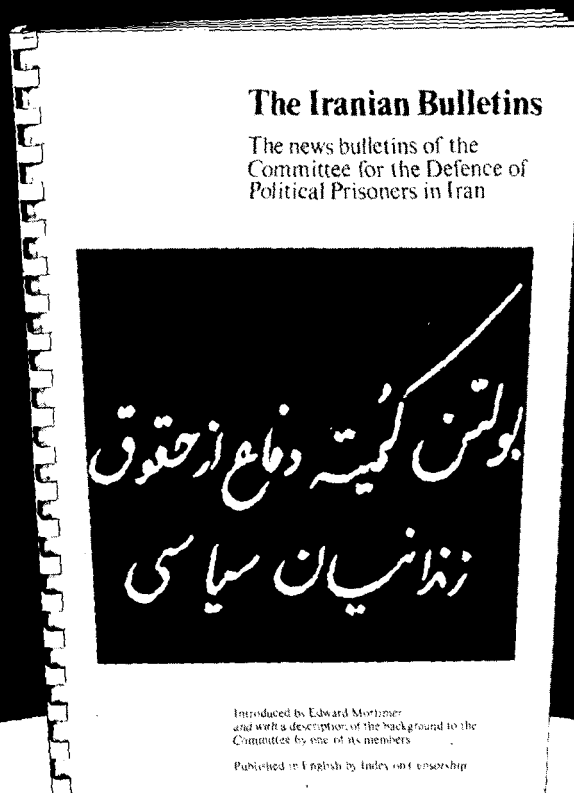
With regard to quotations from any classified Department of State documents in the book, the quotations themselves are declassified, but not the remainder of the documents from which the quotes were taken. References to or paraphrases of Department of State documents appearing in the book do not reflect a decision to declassify those documents, nor do references to DOS views, opinions or policy positions reflect a decision to declassify any classified

documents underlying or setting forth those views, opinions or policy positions.

In effect, only quotations were declassified, documents were not. By means of this dodge, no one else can gain access to these documents to determine how faithfully Kissinger made use of them. Most of Kissinger's quotations come from the White House and National Security Council documents. Only the State Department so far has replied to my inquiries, but no doubt the system in all is identical.

This system is a political and intellectual outrage. It is or should be particularly abhorrent to historians and other scholars. It enables political figures to control the history of their own deeds or misdeeds. No partial quotation can be properly understood without its context. Selective quotation is a frequent source of distortion and even falsification. The only remedy is to declassify any document of which a part has been declassified. What is declassified for one should be declassified for all. Whether or not the present classification system is good or bad is not here the question; the real issue is whether government officials should be permitted to make a mockery of it. □

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The consumerists have gone way too far. They have a right to advocate that companies represent their advertising with total integrity, but they don't have a right to run the companies, which too many of them are trying to do. Whether it be the regulators or the consumers, all that most businessmen ask are that the rules be clear and definitive. Ninety-nine percent of them will follow these rules right to the letter. The reason businessmen don't today is that the rules are so long and esoteric that no one can understand them. Most of them don't make any sense. The insensitivity of the regulators just turns people off. It really does. More important, compliance has become so expensive that unless you are a company of some size, you can't afford the legal advice that is required to be in compliance.

We give lip service to free enterprise and then create those kinds of conditions through government and government regulation that preclude the achievement of what we assume to be one of our essential national purposes. This leads us to make a determination as to wherein the real problem lies. We have become so politicized that there is a multitude of power groups and an increasing number of single-issue groups. What this amounts to is that we have all these tremendous pulls on the social fabric and one begins questioning whether the social fabric is strong enough to withstand all of these pulls and jerks. Whether it's the whites, the blacks, the hispanics, the right-to-lifers, or the abortionists, the gun control or the anti-gun control groups, the various religious segments, the environmentalists, the consumerists—each one is virtually committed to the precept that if they can't have their way on that one particular issue they are not going to play. We condemn the politician, and yet we say to him, "You vote any way you want to, but if you don't vote right on the particular issue that I deem important, you will not have my support." We don't ask them to be statesmen any longer, with an overall concern for this nation. We ask them only to be concerned with one particular issue. This

democracy is not strong enough to survive these attitudes.

This "me first" thinking has made this nation susceptible to believing that what it wants is a strong leader. We always need strong leadership. My concern is, what do we really mean when we say we want a strong leader? I suspect that some of us are thinking in terms of someone who would be autocratic, who would caress power and use it without sensitivity to the democratic process. Some of us yearn for that kind of power leader because we have resigned ourselves to the fact that there is really nothing that we can do. And even more disastrous, too many of us have concluded that we don't even want to think about it. We want somebody else to do the thinking. Things have gotten so big that we really can't control them through the democratic process. That's the way we are currently thinking. I reject this, and I hope that you do too.

Perhaps we need to give some thought to maximizing growth, but at the same time limiting the size of individual companies, especially mergers, the conglomerates and the multinationals. Once you limit size, you insure a multiplicity of businesses in each industry; and then and only then can you be assured that there will be an allocation of wealth and opportunity by impersonal market forces rather than allocation by political decisions which leads only to totalitarianism.

Now you ask, what are some of the remedies? We have to become a nation of opportunity once again—meaningful opportunity, one that is observable, one that Americans can see emerging on a daily basis. We have become too security conscious, have traded off security for opportunity and freedom. We do want security, but any society that seeks to eliminate anxiety in the economic realm to a great extent will pay the price of losing a lot of its freedom and most of its opportunity. A thriving economy will have many job opportunities. Unemployment for those that really want to work is an intolerable situation in a free democratic, capitalistic society. Small businesses are more labor intensive and provide many more jobs, and more interesting jobs too. We need to use our taxing authority to produce the kind of society that we want. Realistically, Americans have to make a philosophical determination of the kind of America they want, and then we have to elect those politicians that will have the courage to enact the kinds of laws that will bring this about. To get there we have to recommit ourselves.

(To be continued.)

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